



CONSECRATION GUIDE

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CONSECRATION

AND WHY WE NEED IT

The next seven days could be life-changing as you take this journey, but it won't be easy. You will be physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally challenged. There will be moments when you feel frustrated, tired, ashamed, and even angry. At the same time, you will see the work of the Holy Spirit in a fresh way. You will find freedom from sin, guilt, and shame. There is power in purity! Let's answer some important questions that will help you stay the course and experience the blessing of spiritual renewal that comes through personal consecration.

Consecration is a word that means "to cleanse someone or something from sin or impurity, and then setting the person or thing apart to the Lord for His purposes." In essence, it's an intentional, strategic process of repenting of personal sin for the purpose of personal holiness. Sin grieves and quenches the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This causes us to miss out on the freedom, power, and joy that is ours through Jesus. In personal consecration, we are inviting the Holy Spirit to take a deep look into every part of our life and expose those things that are quenching or grieving Him so that we can be fully set apart for His purposes in our lives. Consecration is like a "spiritual spring cleaning" for the soul. It goes beyond surface-level confession and examines every part of our lives in order to deal with every sin. The end goal is to be fully surrendered to Jesus and be completely filled with the Holy Spirit.

Our aim in this journey is to seek and enjoy the presence of God both personally and corporately. James 4:8 says, *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you... Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."* This passage has both a command and a promise; the command is to "draw near to God." This is an intentional desire and pursuit to be in closer proximity to God than you are currently. The promise is that if we "draw near" to Him, He will "draw near to us." It's obvious that if we need to "draw near" to Him that there is a distance between us, so how do we bridge this gap? He says it very clearly in verses 8b-10: *"...cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."* We "draw near" through

both a “cleansing of the hands”—repenting of our actions and “purifying our heart”—repenting of this sin within. This leads to mourning, weeping, and being filled with godly sorrow over our sin. This humility, according to James, will lead to the Lord exalting us. It is through the activity of personal consecration that we encounter God’s presence more deeply in our lives. As we take this journey together of drawing near to Him through this season of consecration, we experience a deeper sense of His presence in us as individuals and as a faith family.

REVIVAL AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Revival is when God’s Spirit is poured out on His church, reviving her to fresh spiritual vitality. Spiritual awakening is what happens in culture as a result of a church revived. God moves through His revived people with power, and as they proclaim the Gospel, the lost are saved. Through Scripture and church history, we see that revival and spiritual awakening have been connected to seasons of corporate prayer, fasting, and consecration. When God’s people posture themselves in humble desperation and repentance, God’s Spirit moves. We are in desperate need for this to happen again. The only hope for a dying culture is a revived church!

GUIDE OUTLINE AND HOW TO USE IT

This guide will highlight meditating on scripture, personal questions, and intentional prayers of repentance. Make the most of the experience by:

- Planning for one hour daily to work through this guide.
- Having your guide, journal, pen, and Bible with you.
- Reading the assigned passages, praying, and listening to worship songs.
- Being honest and vulnerable. Honesty before the Lord is vital.
- Reading each passage and working through every question slowly, thoughtfully, and humbly.
- Confessing every sin the Holy Spirit reveals and taking whatever actions He calls you to.
- Ending each day by thanking God for His grace and forgiveness, and asking the Holy Spirit to fill you.
- Bringing any other requests burdening you to Him.

DAY ONE

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

As we begin this process, we must have confidence in our relationship with God. If we are uncertain whether we have received His love, grace, and forgiveness, we will not experience the freedom available when we come to Him in confession and repentance. **Answer a few questions:**

- Do you ever experience doubt about your salvation?
- Do you have uncertainty about whether or not you have a personal relationship with Jesus?
- Do you sometimes find it difficult to approach Jesus with confidence that you belong to Him?
- When you sin, do you ever feel like you are not a Christian, or that you need to clean yourself up before you spend time with Jesus?

Doubting our salvation can be caused by several different reasons—undealt with sin, the enemy creating doubt and uncertainty to hinder our confidence in the Lord, a lack of understanding about the Gospel, or even the Holy Spirit revealing our need for salvation and inviting us to experience it. Regardless of the source of doubt, there is good news! God desires for us to know with certainty that we are saved, be confident in His love for us, and know that He hears us when we pray. 1 John 5:13-14 says, *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”* Let’s take a moment to remember what salvation is, what it does in our lives, and how we receive it.

WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation is a gift that God has provided for us by His grace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Ephesians 2:1 says, *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.”* This simply means that without Jesus, we are all spiritually dead because of our sin. Sin has separated us from the spiritual and eternal life that is found through a relationship with God. The devastating reality is that there is absolutely nothing we can do on our own to change this condition, and that is why we need the Gospel! The word “Gospel” means “an announcement of good news.” The good

news is that though we are dead in our sin, God loved us so much that He sent Jesus (God in the flesh) to live a sinless life, to die in our place for our sin, and then resurrected to life on the third day, defeating death and hell for us. Jesus stood in our place, receiving the punishment we deserved because of our sin. He then invites us into a relationship with Him so that we can receive eternal life (John 17:3). This is all a work of His grace! Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* We are reminded here that our salvation is not dependent upon what we do for Jesus but on what Jesus has done for us.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE’RE SAVED?

When a person experiences salvation, two things occur. First, we are “made righteous” (Romans 3:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Righteousness simply means God’s moral perfection. This is what is required for us to have a relationship with God. Because of sin, no one possesses righteousness inherently, no matter how good or bad we are (Romans 3:9-12). But when we place our faith in Jesus, God transfers our sin to Jesus, and Jesus’ righteousness is transferred to us. Instantly and permanently, we are spiritually clothed in the moral perfection of Jesus. Secondly, we are “made alive” (Ephesians 2:4-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17 Titus 3:4-6). This simply means that we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes us alive in Jesus. The presence of the Holy Spirit eternally seals our salvation and begins to transform us from the inside out to reflect the nature of Jesus (Ephesians 1:13-14). There will be both a noticeable and progressive difference in a person’s life because they are a new creation. We will not be perfect, but we will be different!

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE SALVATION?

Jesus tells us in Mark 1:14, *“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”* According to Jesus, two words give us the answer to salvation: repent and believe! Repentance means to turn from whatever we have been trusting in and turning to Jesus, submitting to Him as the Lord of our life. This leads us to the second word—believe. To believe means to place our faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection as our only hope for the forgiveness of sin.

This is not just intellectual agreement or knowledge, but a transfer of trust from whatever you have believed in to fully rest your life on Jesus and Jesus alone! This can only occur through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, leading us to a definitive personal response of repentance of sin and belief in the Gospel. John 1:12-13 says, *“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”* No one is born a Christian or inherits the faith naturally. It does not happen by growing up in church or in a Christian family. For a person to be saved, there must have been a moment of personal response to the Gospel.

- Do you remember a time when you recognized a deep sense of lostness because of sin leading you to a personal response of repentance and belief in Jesus, surrendering your life to Him as Lord? (If so, write out that experience)
- When/if this happened in your life, did you experience a noticeable difference?

If the answer to either question is no, you can do it right now! Simply cry out to God in prayer, repenting of your sin and placing your faith in Jesus' death and resurrection as your only hope of forgiveness. Surrender to Him as Lord and ask Him for new life!

If yes, spend a few moments in prayer, thanking God for His salvation. Ask Him for a deeper confidence in the salvation He has provided. In your journal, write a brief testimony of your salvation and about the changes that Jesus caused following it.

WHAT IS EVIDENCE OF SALVATION?

Jesus says in Matthew 7:21, *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5, *“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”* Both Jesus and Paul want us to be

certain of our salvation through personal examination. Now that we have seen what salvation is, what it produces, and how we receive it, let's take a few moments and contemplate five evidences of salvation. As you read these, examine your own life.

EVIDENCE 1

There will be an awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, confirming that we belong to God.

Romans 8:16 says, *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."*

This simply means that the presence of the Holy Spirit will be evident in our lives. He will cause us to be convicted over sin, give us desires to love and please Jesus, and empower us to overcome sin.

EVIDENCE 2

Salvation produces new desires because we have received a new heart.

Ezekiel 36: 26-27 says, *"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."*

We receive a new heart with new desires to follow in obedience to Jesus. This does not mean we will stop sinning, but we will live differently and want to obey His Word.

EVIDENCE 3

There will be a personal relationship with Jesus.

John 10:27-28 says, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."*

John 17:3 says, *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

Jesus says those who belong to Him hear Him, recognize His voice, and follow Him. According to John 17:3, eternal life is a personal, intimate relationship with the Father through Him. Salvation is not just intellectual knowledge about Jesus, but a friendship with Him.

EVIDENCE 4

We will desire spiritual growth and will see spiritual progress.

1 John 3:3 says, *“And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”*

2 Corinthians 3:18 says, *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

We will have a desire to grow in holiness and to be transformed from the inside out, and this transformation will happen over time in the life of every true believer.

EVIDENCE 5

True followers of Jesus will love other brothers and sisters in Christ and will want to have fellowship with them.

1 John 3:14-16 says, *“We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”*

Followers of Jesus will possess a genuine love for other believers. There will also be a desire for regular fellowship and connection with God’s people.

Take a moment of examination and prayerfully answer the following questions:

- Do you see the evidences of the Holy Spirit in your life? If so, what are they? In what ways has Jesus changed you since you received salvation?
- Do you have a desire to love and obey Jesus? In what ways are you seeing His power at work in your life to overcome sin?
- Would you describe yourself as a person who has a personal relationship with Jesus? If so, what does that look like in your life? Do you find it easy to talk to Jesus in prayer? Do you desire to spend time alone with Him? Do you ever get a sense of God speaking to your heart?

- Do you have a hunger for reading God's Word? Are you living in pursuit of Godliness and Christ-likeness? If so, what does that look like? Are you seeing more and more spiritual victory in your life over sin, or do you live in defeat?
- Are you a person who could be described as having a genuine love for people? Is there a desire in you to be connected to church and other believers? Do you find it easy to show love and extend forgiveness to others because of Jesus?

If you saw very little evidence of true salvation after examining these questions, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted friend or minister. If you sense assurance of your salvation after examining these questions, be encouraged to continue on this journey with confidence that as you come before the throne of grace in confession, God hears you and welcomes you to come to Him.

Take a moment to meditate on the following verses and pray through the prompts below:

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

- Hebrews 4:16

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:28-30

- Picture yourself entering into the throne room, mentally shut the door behind you, humble yourself before the Heavenly Father, and rest for a moment, thanking Him for His grace.
- Ask Jesus to give you confidence as you come before Him this week in confession.
- Request supernatural courage to be honest and open about every sin or questionable area in your life.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to show you on this journey the depth of God's love for you.
- Surrender your will to Him and express your desire for holiness and spiritual freedom.

DAY TWO

SINFUL THOUGHTS

What we think matters! When it comes to sin, we often give our attention merely to the outward action of sin. The truth is that sin originates in the heart and mind. In reality, we are either honoring the Lord or dishonoring Him in our thought life. If we are going to walk in purity before the Lord, we must deal with any and every sinful thought. As you walk through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you every area of your thought life that is sinful. Listen to His voice, confess every sin, repent, and ask Him to renew your mind.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various categories of your thought life:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” - Romans 12:2

*“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”
- 2 Corinthians 10:5*

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” - Psalm 139:23-24

Key Passage: *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” - Colossians 3:1-3*

Reflection: As believers, we are commanded to place our minds’ attention on spiritual things, not earthly things. This is a call to be Kingdom-minded. We are to be a people who think about God’s Kingdom, His mission, and purposes for our lives. Jesus has raised us to live for eternal things, and our ability to live this way will be impacted by our thought life.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Is your mind often consumed with earthly or temporal things like recreation, work, or hobbies more than spiritual or eternal things?
- Do you find yourself being more focused on personal wants and desires than you are serving Jesus and others?
- Are there patterns in your thought life that place more emphasis on what others think of you and how to gain their approval rather than seeking Jesus’ approval?
- When you dream and imagine your future, how much of your thoughts are considering God’s desires and His plans for your life?
- If what we love the most is indicated by what we think about the most, what does your thought life indicate you love the most?

Application: If you have noticed a thought pattern indicating that you are more focused on “things below” than “things above,” ask Jesus to forgive you and give you a renewed mind. Write down any sinful thought patterns that stand out the most and ask Jesus to show you specific ways to set your mind on Him.

Key Passage: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

- Matthew 5:27-28

Reflection: Jesus raises the bar on sexual purity. This is a call to mental holiness. He points us beyond the action of sexual immorality, showing us that sexual sin is as much an act of the mind as an act of the body. If we are going to be a people who walk in sexual purity, we must deal with our thought life.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you find yourself allowing your mind to wander into lustful or impure thoughts?
- Are you allowing your imagination to create impure images in your mind?
- Are there old memories of past sexual sin that you allow to fill your mind?
- Do you have impure thought patterns that would be embarrassing if people were able to see them?
- Do you ever intentionally view things or watch things that create impure mental images?

Application: If you have discovered areas of your thought life that are impure, take a moment to confess and repent of it immediately. Ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse you on the inside. Identify thoughts that need to change and target the moments, times, and places in your life where you struggle the most. Allow God’s Word to replace any lustful or impure thought that comes to mind. Address sinful thoughts in prayer and scripture as soon as they enter your mind! Is there anyone you need to confess this to? Who can you invite into this fight for accountability?

Key Passage: *“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”*

- Psalm 139:13-14

Reflection: As believers, we are commanded to place our minds’ attention on spiritual things, not earthly things. This is a call to be Kingdom-minded. We are to be a people who think about God’s Kingdom, His mission, and purposes for our lives. Jesus has raised us to live for eternal things, and our ability to live this way will be impacted by our thought life.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are you often filled with feelings of insignificance or insecurity?
- Do you find yourself living with anxiety, fear, or worry about how others feel about you or if you have their approval?
- Do you obsess with your physical appearance in a way that indicates you are seeking to find value and worth in it?
- Are there moments when you internally put yourself down or feel that you are not good enough?
- Do you ever question whether people really love you or if you are worthy to be loved?

Application: If these questions indicate that you are battling low self-worth, recognize that those feelings and thoughts are contrary to what God says about you (Psalm 139). It is sinful for us to believe something about ourselves that contradicts His Word. Confess and repent of those self-deprecating thoughts. Identify the specific thoughts that you are having most frequently and submit them to Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to allow God’s Word to give you a new self-image.

SELF-CENTERED THINKING

Key Passage: *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”*

- Philippians 2:3-5

Reflection: We are called here to live a selfless life as opposed to a selfish life. This is literally a call to have the mind of Christ. This is a life that doesn't just think about what is best for us, but one that considers what is best for others. If we are living self-focused, self-absorbed lives, we are not living with the mind of Christ.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you find yourself often looking out for what is best for you, or do you think regularly about what is best for others?
- Do you spend more time in relationships thinking about what people do for you than finding ways to serve them?
- In conflict, do you listen to the heart of others or ignore them by thinking about your response?
- Are there times when you do for others because of what you can get in return?
- Do you ever pursue God for what He can give you rather than simply because you love Him?

Application: If you are convicted of self-centered thinking in any area, take a moment to confess it to the Lord. Ask Him to purify your heart and give you the mind of Christ. Take a moment to reflect on Jesus' life and identify specific ways that Jesus demonstrates selflessness. Thank Him for His sacrifice, and ask Him to show you what this looks like in your life and relationships.

Key Passage: *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”* - Philippians 4:8

Reflection: We are often bombarded with negativity in our culture. There is a constant influx of negative posts on social media, news outlets, and conversations. As believers, if we are not careful, we will have our minds full of negative messages that will dominate the way we think. We are called in this verse to be a people who do not allow negativity to fill our minds but rather allow our minds to be dominated by those things that honor the Lord and are praiseworthy.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you typically tend to highlight the negative in situations, or do you give your attention to the positives?
- Do you assume the worst in people or look for the best in them?
- Do you give your attention to the difficulties in your life and often overlook the blessings?
- Considering Philippians 4:8, would those closest to you say this passage describes you?
- Do you find yourself praying more to God about what you need rather than thanking Him for who He is and what He has already given you?

Application: If you see a pattern of negativity, recognize it as sinful behavior and ask Jesus to forgive you. Pray for a renewed mind that allows you to see God's blessings in your life. Take a moment and make a list of God's goodness in your life. Think about some of the hard moments you have experienced, and look for the blessings God gave you through those hard times.

Key Passage: *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” - Joshua 1:8*

Reflection: We often see this call to meditate day and night in the scriptures. This means to think deeply or to ponder on it continually. God’s desire is for our minds to be filled with His Word. As His Word fills our minds and thoughts, the Holy Spirit will direct us in obedience. We cannot experience the renewing of our minds without God’s Word. The transformation of our mind doesn’t happen simply by trying to stop thinking wrongly but by taking those thoughts “captive to obedience to

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you have a regular rhythm of reading the bible daily?
- Are you taking intentional time daily to meditate on and memorize scripture?
- Do you use God’s Word to battle temptation, or do you try to resist it on your own?
- When you attend church or Bible study, do you have a habit of bringing your Bible?
- Would you say that you live each day with a genuine hunger for God’s Word, or does it feel like labor to read the Bible?

Application: If you recognize that God’s Word has been neglected in your life, confess this to the Lord and ask Him to give you a deeper hunger for it. Realize that your mind will not be transformed without making this a priority in your life. Write down a few key verses from today and begin to memorize them to help you honor the Lord with your thoughts.

DAY THREE

SINFUL HEART

Jesus is most concerned about our hearts because they are the root cause of our sin. The Bible tells us that our heart is wicked (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Jesus desires for our hearts to be transformed and fully devoted to Him, but when our hearts are filled with pride, idolatry, divided devotion, or anger that goes unchecked, it grieves the work of the Holy Spirit in us. As you walk through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the true condition of your heart and respond in repentance to everything sinful that He exposes. Be thorough in your examination, respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and be specific about every sin you need to confess.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various categories of your thought life:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."
- Jeremiah 17:9-10

"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" - Psalm 139:23-24

"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." - Luke 6:45

Take a moment and list some of the sinful areas of your heart that immediately come to mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal specific sins of the heart you must confess.

Key Passage: *“The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished... Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” - Proverbs 16:5,18*

Reflection: The Psalmist makes it clear that pride is a problem. The Bible repeatedly communicates that God detests humanity’s pride and desires for us to walk before Him and others in humility. Pride is the pathway of destruction; it causes us to be indifferent towards Jesus and arrogant towards others. Every great work God does in us begins with personal brokenness and humility. According to James, God resists the proud but offers grace to the humble in heart (James 4:6).

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you find yourself judging and criticizing others for their failures but giving yourself a pass?
- Do you put up walls or become angry when people highlight sin or weaknesses in your life?
- Is there any part of you that walks in self-righteousness, thinking that you are more spiritual than others?
- In all honesty, are you more bothered by the sin of others than you are broken over your own sin?
- Do you have a genuine hunger for more of Jesus right now, or have you been somewhat complacent?

Application: If you hint the slightest evidence of pride in your heart, confess and repent of it. Be specific and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a humble heart. If there is anyone in your life that you have acted arrogantly towards, humble yourself and seek their forgiveness. Ask Jesus to give you a deeper awareness of your sin and need for grace.

Key Passage: *“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory...*

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.” - James 2:1, 8-9

Reflection: We see explicitly that there is no room in the hearts of believers for any kind of prejudice or partial treatment of people. Every person is valuable because they are made in the image of God, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender. This kind of sin is so damaging to people and to our witness as believers. We cannot say that we love God while simultaneously mistreating people made in His image. We must address the smallest hint of this type of sin.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you find yourself judging people you do not know on the basis of their appearance, race, or economic status?
- Do you seclude yourself by only sharing life with your own race, culture, or social status by intentionally avoiding people who are different than you?
- Do you view those who are better off financially than you with jealousy or resentment?
- Are there times when you look down on people who are not as blessed financially as you?
- Do you ever treat people differently (good or bad) on the basis of their appearance, race, or social status?

Application: As you worked through these questions, did you see evidence of partiality or prejudice tendencies in your life? If so, ask Jesus to forgive you and to remove this from your heart. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you a genuine love for all people. Ask Him what steps you need to take to live differently.

ANGER AND HOSTILITY

Key Passage: *“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God...”*

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” - James 1:19-20; 4:1

Reflection: Anger is inconsistent with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit produces patience and kindness, but a sinful heart produces anger. When our temper flares, leading us to outbursts of anger or the inward disposition of hostility, this is an indicator that our heart is not aligned with the Holy Spirit. We must repent of this condition. Colossians 3:8 gives us these instructions: “But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice...”

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you frequently lose your temper outwardly or find yourself inwardly angry at people?
- Are there people in your life who feel the need to “walk on eggshells” in fear of you becoming angry?
- Would Jesus describe you as being short-tempered, or would He describe you as patient?
- Which set of words describe you the best: “patient, kind, and gentle” or “angry, irritable, and frustrated”?
- Do you get easily angered or offended when people wrong you, or do you usually extend grace to them, giving them the benefit of the doubt?

Application: Colossians 3:8 makes it clear that if there is anger or hostility in our hearts, we should rid ourselves of it. If you see anger or hostility surfacing in any area of your life, take a moment to confess it to the Lord. Identify any relationships you have where anger is most predominant. Seek their forgiveness. Reflect on the love of Jesus and His patience and grace towards you. Ask Him to give you a heart like His!

Key Passage: *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”* - Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Reflection: God desires and demands an undivided heart. He calls us to love Him with all of who we are and refuses to share us. Often, we are guilty of giving our heart and affection to the things of this world. We grow cold in our passion for Him and give our devotion to our hobbies, friendships, family, money, career, ministry, and many other things. The Bible calls this idolatry, yet we can never be fully satisfied with these substitute idols. A life of fullness can only be found in complete devotion to Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you find it easier to scroll through social media or watch your favorite programs than to spend time in God’s Word and prayer?
- Are there activities in your life that cause you to be unfaithful to church or personal time with the Lord?
- Would you describe your relationship with Jesus right now as one of full devotion?
- Is it easy for you to pray, worship, and study the Bible, or when you try, are you constantly thinking about other things you should be doing?
- Based upon what you think about, prioritize, or talk about the most in your life, what would be considered the “first love” of your life?

Application: Spend some time listing any and everything in your life that is competing for your affection and devotion to Jesus. Repent of idolatry and ask Jesus to rearrange these things in your life. Be willing to lay aside any activity that is hindering or rivaling your affection for Jesus. Ask Him to rekindle your passion for Him and to help you love Him with all of your heart! Start by meditating on and remembering His love for you.

DAY FOUR

SINFUL TALK

How we speak is a reflection of our heart. Luke 6:45 tells us, *“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.”* What we say and how we speak is an indicator of what resides deep within us. When we are untruthful, deceptive, harsh, vulgar, or critical with our words, it dishonors the Lord and is harmful to others. As we walk through this session, rely on the Holy Spirit to show you areas of speech that must be repented of and surrendered to Him. Be completely humble, honest, and transparent, allowing Him to cleanse you from the inside out.

Prayerfully read the verses below and ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you and help you begin the journey of renewing your mind by surrendering your thoughts to Christ:

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” - Luke 6:45

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” - Ephesians 4:30-32

“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.” - James 1:26

Key Passage: *“Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”*

- Ephesians 5:3

Reflection: As followers of Jesus, our speech should be set apart and above reproach. Paul makes it clear here that crude, filthy, or immoral talking should be eliminated from our lives. This would include cursing, dirty or questionable joking, and conversations that are inappropriate. We are called to holiness not just in the way we walk but in the way we talk. Our speech should reflect the righteousness we have received in Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you frequently use curse words when you are angry or when you are around certain people?
- Do you find delight in telling or participating in jokes that are vulgar or inappropriate?
- When you're angry, does cursing or vulgar language seem to be your default speech?
- In conversations with close friends, do you allow suggestive or inappropriate content to be commonplace?
- If an unbelieving person were to hear you speak, what would their opinion of Jesus be?

Application: If you recognize that you have unconfessed sinful language or speech, take a moment and seek forgiveness. Submit this area of your life to Jesus and ask Him to give you clean speech. You may have to go to family or friends whom you have damaged with your speech and ask their forgiveness. Eliminate music, movies, or environments that fill you with unwholesome speech. Replace it with more of God's Word.

Key Passage: *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” - Ephesians 4:29-32*

Reflection: It is clear in this passage that how we talk to and about one another matters. In fact, speaking harshly to or about another person grieves the Holy Spirit. This literally means that it breaks His heart when we talk in a way that tears people down rather than building them up. Any outburst of anger, slander, or malicious speech should be eliminated. It should be replaced with a kind, tender, and forgiving heart that speaks to others in a Christlike manner. The transformation of our mind doesn't happen simply by trying to stop thinking wrongly but by taking those thoughts “captive to obedience to Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:5).

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you have a tendency to speak harshly to people or rudely to people but justify it under the banner of being a truth-teller?
- Are you critical in the way you speak to or about people, using your words to tear people down rather than build up?
- Do you lash out in anger when someone offends or wrongs you?
- Are you more likely to verbally justify your actions, or are you a person who is quick to apologize and seek forgiveness and restoration?
- Do you speak with kindness to your spouse or family, or do you have a tendency to be cranky, harsh, and short with them?

Application: If you recognize this kind of sin in your speech, confess it to the Lord and repent. Acknowledge that you have grieved the Holy Spirit and ask for His forgiveness. If there are people that you have hurt with your words, humbly seek their forgiveness immediately. Ask the Lord to give you an understanding of the root cause of this behavior. Surrender it to Jesus and allow His Spirit to transform you in this area.

Key Passage: *“For I fear that perhaps when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.” - 2 Corinthians 12:20*

Reflection: We live in a culture filled with controversial and slanderous dialogue. As followers of Jesus, there should be a distinction between those who belong to Him versus those who do not know Him. In the Bible, “slander” is the word “Diablos,” which is translated as “Devil.” When we gossip, slander, and stir up controversy, we imitate the enemy’s tactics.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are rumors and gossip perpetuated by you, or do you end them when they get to you?
- Are you a person people come to when they have complaints because they find it easy to talk negatively about others to you?
- Do you tend to paint people negatively when they are not around?
- When there is controversy, do you defuse it or add fuel to it?
- When you are wronged or frustrated with people or the church, do you feel the need to make sure other people know about it?

Application: We have been called to walk in unity. If you see a tendency to gossip or participate in negative and divisive conversations, ask the Lord to forgive you and change your heart. Jesus says, *“Blessed are the peacemakers”* (Matthew 5:9). Ask Him to empower you to be a person who uses your speech to build up others and preserve unity. Commit to guarding your tongue in this area.

Key Passage: *“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”* - Philippians 2:14-15

Reflection: As believers, we are called to give thanks in all things (1 Thess. 5:18). Far too often, we become a people who grumble and complain, forgetting the blessings of the Lord. When our speech is filled with negativity about situations and circumstances, we are not walking in the Spirit but in the flesh. When the Spirit of God is in control, He gives us a heart of worship, enabling us to praise Him in all things.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are you a person who tends to be very vocal about the difficulties and hardships you face?
- When conversing with people who ask you about your life, do you give your attention to God’s blessings or life’s challenges?
- In your prayer life, do you spend more time asking God for things or thanking Him for what He’s already given you?
- Would people closest to you describe you as an optimist or a pessimist?
- Which verse describes you more: “...because the Lord has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him...” (Exodus 16:8c) or “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)?

Application: As you have reflected on these questions, if the Holy Spirit has shown you the slightest hint of grumbling and complaining speech, ask the Lord for His forgiveness. Spend some time reflecting on His goodness. List the blessings He has given you, and spend some time in prayer thanking Him for each one.

Key Passage: *“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.” - Ephesians 4:25*

Reflection: God has made it clear in His word that speaking lies is inconsistent with His character and nature. He even included it in the Ten Commandments. God is a God of truth. In Jesus, we are called to reflect His nature by “putting away falsehood” and “speaking the truth.” Often, we are guilty of stretching the truth in exaggeration or altering the truth for selfish purposes. This dishonors the Lord and hinders His activity in our lives.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you ever lie, exaggerate, or alter the truth to paint yourself in a better light with others?
- Are you honest about how you report your taxes or do business with others?
- Do you ever add or subtract details about situations to mislead someone?
- Do you always keep your word and commitments to people, institutions, and God?
- Are you a person who is reliable or dependable, or are you at times untrustworthy?

Application: The absence of integrity is a sin. If you have discovered any area of your life where you are untruthful, repent immediately and ask the Lord to empower you to walk in truth. Identify the cause of your untruthful tendencies. Often, it is driven by fear or insecurities. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the root cause and surrender to Jesus.

DAY FIVE

SINFUL RELATIONSHIPS

God has created us to live in community with people, but in a fallen and sinful world, this can be full of challenges. We are all broken people, and often this brokenness surfaces in relationships. Selfishness, immorality, unforgiveness, and bitterness can create deep wounds in and through us. Jesus desires us to reflect Him in every relationship, no matter how difficult. When we have sinful relationships with others, it impacts our relationship with Him. As we work through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to help you examine every relationship in your past or present to see if there is any relationship with unresolved conflict, sin or wounds needing repentance or reconciliation.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various sins of the heart:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." - Ephesians 4:1-3

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Ephesians 4:30-32

"But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints." - Ephesians 5:3

Take a moment and list any unreconciled relationships in your life.

Key Passage: *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.” - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5*

Reflection: God’s will for every believer is sexual purity and holiness. It is not possible for a believer to walk in fellowship with Jesus while practicing sexual immorality. This could be personal immorality through lustful thoughts or pornography, which uses a person as an object of sexual gratification. It could be sexual involvement with someone outside of the boundaries of biblical marriage, which is adultery or fornication.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you see a pattern of lustful thoughts for someone you are not married to or the use of pornography in your life?
- Are you involved in any relationship outside of marriage where there is sexually inappropriate conversation or sexual activity?
- Are you sexually active in any way outside of marriage?
- If you are married, is there any relationship outside of your marriage where you are allowing physical attraction or emotional connection to go unchecked?
- Have you fully repented of all past sexual sin, and if married, have you been completely honest with your spouse?

Application: If the Holy Spirit is convicting you of any area of immorality in your life, take some time to repent of it. Be specific about each sin and ask the Holy Spirit what steps need to be taken to walk in complete healing and holiness. It might require you to confess to a spouse or friend, end an inappropriate relationship, or place guardrails in your life.

Key Passage: *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”* - Ephesians 4:30-32

Reflection: When we allow bitterness and unforgiveness to remain in our lives, it grieves the Holy Spirit. Bitterness grows from unforgiveness and is like cancer in our soul that will ultimately destroy our joy in life. The enemy wants us to hold grudges, be filled with animosity, and allow wounds to go unhealed. Yet Jesus calls us to forgive one another as He has forgiven us. Forgiveness is the pathway to freedom and healing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are there people who have wounded you, and whenever you see them or think of them, you are filled with anger, fear, or insecurity?
- Have you experienced past abuse or mistreatment that you have never shared or found healing from?
- Do you have bitterness or unforgiveness towards anyone in your past or present that you are holding on to?
- Are there any failures in your past that control you today because you have not forgiven yourself?
- Do you have walls in present relationships because of past hurts?

Application: If you recognize any person in the past or present that you have not forgiven or are harboring bitterness toward, begin the journey of forgiveness right now. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to forgive. Acknowledge the offense to the Lord, share with Him your hurt, confess the sin of bitterness and unforgiveness to Him, and release it to the Lord. Remember that forgiveness is a process that takes time. It isn't forgetting the pain; it's choosing to no longer live in it. If you have past abuse or trauma that you have never shared or dealt with, seek the help of a parent, trusted friend, minister, or counselor who can help you begin the healing journey.

Key Passage: *“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” - Matthew 5:23-24*

Reflection: Jesus makes it very clear that unreconciled relationships affect our relationship with Him. When we hurt or offend others, we must seek reconciliation with them. Often, we are too prideful or arrogant to humble ourselves and seek the forgiveness of people we have wounded. Jesus calls us to swallow our pride and to seek reconciliation with anyone we have wronged or offended.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are you quick to genuinely say you are sorry when you have hurt or offended someone, or do you dismiss, excuse, and explain it away?
- Is there anyone in your life you have wronged, even in the smallest way, you have not sought forgiveness from?
- Have you sinned against anyone in action or speech against their knowledge that you have not asked forgiveness for?
- Do you need to seek forgiveness from anyone you have held bitterness or unforgiveness towards?
- Have you ever mistreated your spouse, children, friends, or coworkers but just moved past it and never asked for their forgiveness?

Application: If you can identify any unreconciled offense you have caused in any relationship, confess it by name to the Lord. Ask Him what He wants you to do to seek reconciliation. It might be a phone call, a card, a text message, or a visit. Do and say whatever He tells you and humbly owning it without excuses. Remember, we are not responsible for how they receive it, but we are responsible for our obedience. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare their heart and yours and immediately do whatever He says.

DAY SIX

SINFUL DISOBEDIENCE

As followers of Jesus, our posture before Him should always be complete surrender. This means that we walk in obedience to everything revealed to us in Scripture and obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit in our lives, remembering that God's Word and God's Spirit will always be in perfect harmony. When we walk in disobedience of any kind, it quenches the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Disobedience can come in two ways. It could be commission (doing something God has commanded us not to do) or omission (not doing something that He has commanded us to do). We will examine both categories to allow the Holy Spirit to highlight any areas of disobedience.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various sins of the heart:

"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." - James 4:17

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." - John 10:27-28

"But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." - James 1:25

Take a moment and list any areas of disobedience that come to your mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you other specific ways that you may be walking in disobedience.

Key Passage: *“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.” - Luke 21:34*

Reflection: The Bible is unmistakably clear that drunkenness is a sin. We often only apply this to the use of alcohol, but this includes any substance, including prescription drugs or sleeping medication, that we misuse, rely upon, or have become addicted to. We are called to be under the control of the Holy Spirit, so when we are dependent upon or controlled by other substances, we are not walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you ever find yourself over-drinking or being impaired by a controlled substance (including prescription drugs or sleep aids)?
- Do you currently use alcohol or drugs to cope with stress?
- Do you currently consume alcohol despite seeing patterns in your own life or in your family history of drunkenness or alcoholism?
- Do you ever misuse any prescription drugs, sleeping medications, or illegal drugs?
- Would people closest to you say that you drink too much alcohol or misuse drugs of any kind?

Application: If you see a pattern of substance abuse of any kind, confess and repent of it. Remove it completely from your life. The Bible is clear on this subject. There are more verses in the Bible warning against the misuse of alcohol than there are verses about lying or adultery. Jesus calls us to a life of sobriety, and this is not up for negotiation. If you are addicted, get help immediately. Jesus wants you to be consumed with Him, but if you are addicted, dependent, or misusing drugs or alcohol, it will limit His work in your life.

Key Passage: *“I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people.” - Leviticus 20:6*

Reflection: It is obvious in Scriptures that God calls us to be faithful to Him and Him alone. This means that if we seek any spiritual experience, spiritual power, or spiritual forces that are not through the person of Jesus Christ, we are turning to the kingdom of darkness. God’s Word forbids us from trying to access the spiritual realm apart from Jesus. This means the use of horoscopes, psychics, mediums, magic, or mysticism. When we do this, we are engaging in demonic activity and opening a door for the enemy to enter our lives.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you watch movies or read books that include spiritualism or demonic content?
- Have you ever been involved with psychics, mediums, tarot cards, horoscopes, or any other kind of witchcraft?
- Do you practice any form of mysticism, such as meditations, chanting, or rituals?
- Do you allow self-help books or materials that promote self-exaltation to give you guidance? (this is New Age philosophy)
- Do you listen to music or artists that highlight demonic practices, promote immorality, or blaspheme Jesus in any way?

Application: If there is any of this activity or anything similar to it that you have not confessed and renounced, repent of it immediately. Be specific and thorough. Jesus has defeated the enemy through His death and resurrection, and He has delivered us from the kingdom of darkness! When we attempt to have any spiritual experience that is not accessed through Jesus, what we are accessing is evil. Followers of Jesus are to abstain from the appearance of anything that is evil (1 Thes. 5:22-23).

COMMISSION: IDENTIFYING ALL DISOBEDIENCE

Key Passage: “*Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?*”
- Luke 6:46

Reflection: Jesus being Lord means that He is in charge of everything. If we call Him Lord, obedience should be a given. We have looked at two specific areas of sins of commission. Now, let’s broaden it some and identify other areas where disobedience may surface in your life.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you ever cheat on your taxes or in business?
“Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.” - Romans 13:6
- Do you truly serve Jesus with your money, or does your money get in the way of serving Jesus?
“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”
- Matthew 6:24
- Are you faithful to the local church, or do you allow activities to regularly interfere with your commitment to church?
“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” - Hebrews 10:24-25
- Do you allow anything unholy or sinful in your life (movies, music, relationships, podcasts, etc.)?
“But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”
- 1 Peter 1:15-16

Read through the ten commandments and ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you are walking in disobedience to any of them. (Ex. 20:3-14)

ONE

“You shall have no other gods before me.” If you put something else before Him in your life, you are turning that thing into a “god.”

TWO

“You shall not make for yourselves a graven image.” Anything you worship (cars, clothes, sports, jobs, family) is a “graven image.”

THREE

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.” This can mean using God’s name like a curse word, or it can mean saying you follow Jesus but dishonor Him with your lifestyle.

FOUR

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” The Sabbath day is a day we find rest in the Lord. As Christians, we now recognize this primarily on Sunday as a day of gathering in worship.

FIVE

“Honor your father and your mother.” Give them respect because of their position in your life. This applies to all people regardless of age.

SIX

“You shall not kill.” Jesus expands this to include hatred. He says that hatred is murder of the heart.

SEVEN

“You shall not commit adultery.” This is defined as unfaithfulness to a spouse in any form, physical or emotional. Jesus expands this to include lust.

EIGHT

“You shall not steal.” Taking anything that doesn’t belong to you, regardless of how big or small, is stealing.

NINE

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” If you lie to or about someone, you are “bearing false witness.”

TEN

“You shall not covet.” This means to be jealous of something someone else has because we desperately want it.

Application: If you recognize disobedience in any of these areas listed or something not listed, confess it by name and repent of it. Ask Jesus to show you what steps He wants you to take that will help you walk in complete holiness and obedience. Ask Him to cleanse you from every sin of commission.

OMISSION: NEGLECTING PRAYER AND THE WORD

Key Passage: *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”* - John 15:4-5

Reflection: The secret to the Christian life is abiding in Christ. It is the only way to the fruit-filled life that Jesus calls us to live. Jesus commands us in these verses to make abiding in Him a way of life. When we are prayerless or neglect time in the Word, we disobey His call for our lives and set ourselves up for failure. We must not walk in the sin of neglecting intimacy with Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are you faithfully spending time with Jesus in prayer and worship each day, or is it occasional when you have the time?
- Are you guilty of giving Jesus your leftover time, or do you prioritize time with Him each day?
- Do you regularly spend time reading, studying, and memorizing scripture daily?
- Have you developed a corporate prayer rhythm in your life, making room in your schedule to gather with the church in prayer meeting?
- Do you fully engage in Sunday worship, or are you more of a spectator watching others worship?

Application: If you have not prioritized abiding in Jesus, stop right now and confess this to Him. Ask Him to show you why your heart doesn't long for Him more. Pray that He will give you a fresh love for Him. Take some time to make some practical adjustments in your schedule in order to prioritize time with Him.

COMMISSION: NEGLECTING PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Key Passage: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” - Matthew 28:19-20*

Reflection: Every follower of Jesus has been called to make disciples. Jesus’ plan to reach the world with the Gospel is for His people to share it with the people around us. His desire is for us to invite friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors into a personal relationship with Him. If we are not actively engaging the world around us with the Gospel, we are being disobedient to the mission He has given us.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are there people in your life right now that you know are not believers, but you are neglecting the call to share the Gospel with them?
- Do you have a prayer list of people who do not know Jesus that you are actively praying for?
- Have you had opportunities to share the Gospel but, out of fear, chose to remain silent?
- Do you currently feel a burden for people in your life who are lost and dying without Jesus, or would you say that you give very little thought about it?
- Is there anybody right now that you know that the Holy Spirit has prompted you to share the Gospel with, but you have been disobedient?

Application: If Jesus is convicting you of disobedience to His call to share Him with others, ask for His forgiveness. Pray for the Holy Spirit to place people on your heart who are lost. Make a list and begin to pray for them. Take some time to pray Acts 4:29 over your life: *“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.”*

OMISSION: NEGLECTING THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Key Passage: *“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” - Ephesians 5:18-21*

Reflection: We are commanded in this passage to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which is how we experience the fullness of God in our lives. It means that we are under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit, who then produces the power and nature of Jesus in us. According to this passage, it causes us to live lives of worship and humility. It is God's desire and expectation for us to be a people who continually seek the filling of the Holy Spirit through ongoing confession, surrender, and obedience to His work in us.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Do you regularly allow sin of any kind to go unconfessed in your life?
- Are you persistently seeking the filling of the Holy Spirit, or are you apathetic and indifferent toward Him most of the time?
- Is every area of your life submitted to Him, or do you compartmentalize your life, keeping parts hidden and unsundered?
- Do you find yourself often trying to live in your own strength?
- Do you obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, or do you ignore Him to rationalize disobedience?

Application: If you are not actively obeying the command to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit, confess this to Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you for neglecting Him. We cannot fill ourselves, but we can cooperate with Him. Ask Him if there is any sin that you have not confessed, or anything He has called you to do that you have neglected. Surrender to Him and walk in complete obedience to His direction in your life.

DAY SEVEN

SURRENDER EVERYTHING

We are called to live a life of absolute surrender to Jesus. This means that He is in control of every aspect of our lives. Often, we are guilty of picking and choosing what we want to surrender to Him. When we do this, we are in control, not Him. So when it comes to our family, career, ambitions, finances, and strongholds, we must relinquish everything to Him, allowing His will to be above ours. As we work through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to help you examine every aspect of your life and reveal anything that is not completely surrendered to Him.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various categories of your thought life:

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." - Galatians 2:20

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.'" - Matthew 16:24-25

"So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." - Luke 14:33

Take a moment and make a list of any area in your life that comes to mind that you have not surrendered completely to Jesus.

Key Passage: *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”* - Matthew 10:37

Reflection: Jesus demands that our love and devotion to Him be greater than anything and everyone in our lives. This applies to every human relationship, including family. If we are not careful, we will turn our family into an idol that wars for our affection for Jesus. How do we combat this? We must surrender our family to Him. Our marriages, our children, our desire to have children — all of these must be submitted to Him. If single, our desire for a family must be surrendered to Him. Our love for Him and desire for His will must be above everything.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Is Jesus at the center of every area in your marriage and family?
- Are you willing to allow Jesus to do whatever He wants in the life of your children (including where they go to college or live, with their career, or in their health)?
- Does your family’s ambitions and priorities get in the way of your faithfulness to Jesus, His church, or your calling in life?
- If you are battling infertility, will you joyfully follow Him even if He chooses adoption over biological children?
- If you are single, is Jesus enough for you, or are you spiritually discontent with your current season?
- If Jesus took your family or dreams of a family, would you love Him still?

Application: If you recognize any aspect of your family or desire for family that is not surrendered to Him, confess and surrender it immediately. Ask Him what it looks like for His will to be your greatest desire for your family. Ask the Holy Spirit the specific changes that need to be made in your family for Him to be at the center. Willfully lay aside any plans, dreams, or ambitions that are not a part of His will for your family.

Key Passage: *“Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions... Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.” - Malachi 3:8, 10*

Reflection: We are called to “seek first His Kingdom” (Matt. 6:33). This means that in every area of our life, the Kingdom of God must be our priority, including our finances. It is our natural, sinful tendency to want to hold on to it or consume it for our own pleasures, yet we are called to live generous lives and leverage our finances for Kingdom purposes. We see in the passage above that we are called to tithe. This simply means that a tenth of our finances should be devoted to Kingdom work. According to Malachi, when we do not live generously in this way, we are “robbing God.” As Christians, we are called to partner with the local church to advance the Gospel through our generosity.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are you living generously and faithful to biblical tithing?
- Are you guilty of wasteful and meaningless spending?
- Do you have a spending plan that includes seeking the Kingdom first through giving generously, or do you give God your leftovers?
- Are you guilty of receiving blessings from the ministries of the church but not giving generously to the church?
- Does Jesus have full control over your finances and spending habits?

Application: If you recognize that you have been “robbing God” in the area of your finances, surrender that to Him right now. Ask Him what changes need to be made in order to live more generously. It might require you to make a budget, or reorganize a budget in order to be a better steward of what Jesus has entrusted to you.

Key Passage: *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”* - Matthew 5:14-16

Reflection: Jesus tells us here that we have a very unique calling on earth as “the light of the world.” This means that in a world full of darkness, we are to shine the light of the Gospel. Wherever God has placed us, we have a purpose. When it comes to our jobs or careers, it is no accident that we are where we are. God has a plan for us to shine in our workplace for His glory. We often lose sight of this, leading to complacency, discontentment, or working for the wrong reasons. Jesus desires to give us meaning and purpose in our work regardless of what we do.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- Are you currently leveraging your employment as a mission, or do you see it merely as a place to make money?
- Are there co-workers who do not know Jesus that you are actively praying for and sharing with?
- Do you work hard at your job to please the Lord, or do you work hard for the recognition of people?
- When people see your work ethic, integrity, or how you interact with people, does it make them think well of Jesus?
- When was the last time you shared the Gospel with a coworker?

Application: If you are convicted of not leveraging your career for Kingdom purposes, confess that to Jesus and seek His forgiveness. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a burden for the people you work with. Identify people to pray for daily and ask the Holy Spirit for open doors. If you recognize that you have damaged the Gospel in any way, seek forgiveness from the person or people who have been affected. Allow Jesus to shine through you moving forward!

Key Passage: *“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”*

- 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Reflection: When it comes to strongholds, we must recognize the source of the struggle and the source of the power to overcome it. Strongholds are areas in our lives where the enemy holds us captive. Often, it’s a sin tendency that reoccurs repeatedly in our life—a spiritual battle. Because it’s a spiritual battle, we must fight it with spiritual power. We fail when we try to gain victory over these strongholds in our own strength. The life of victory begins with surrender!

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

- What are the strongholds in your life?
- Are there patterns of behavior, emotions, or situations that seem to trigger these sin tendencies in your life?
- Are you guilty of trying in your own strength to overcome them only to end up failing?
- Have you memorized any scripture verses that you can rely upon when you are tempted?
- Are there places, people, or substances that continue to trip you up, but you continue to allow them in your life?

Application: Make a list of the various strongholds in your life. Pray through the list in confession and renounce those activities in your life. Surrender them to Jesus completely. Acknowledge your inability to overcome them and recognize that it is only through Jesus alone that you have victory. Begin memorizing scripture (starting with the verse above) that will help you combat sinful temptations. These steps must become a way of life. Every time one of these struggles surfaces in temptation,, confess it. Confess your inability to overcome without Jesus, surrender to Him, and speak God’s Word to into the temptation...repeat!

CONCLUSION

You have officially come to the end of this journey! Ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything that has not been fully revealed in your life. If He reveals anything, take what you have learned and confess it completely. Spend some time thanking Him for this journey. Give Him thanks for the blood of Jesus that cleanses us and makes us holy.

Take a moment and journal what He has done in your life over the past seven days and what you hope life looks like moving forward.



NEW BEGINNINGS