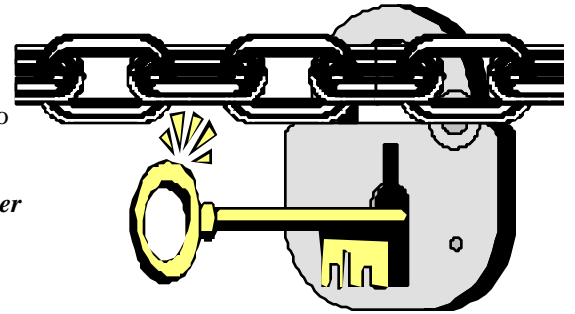


5. Spiritual Freedom

Introduction

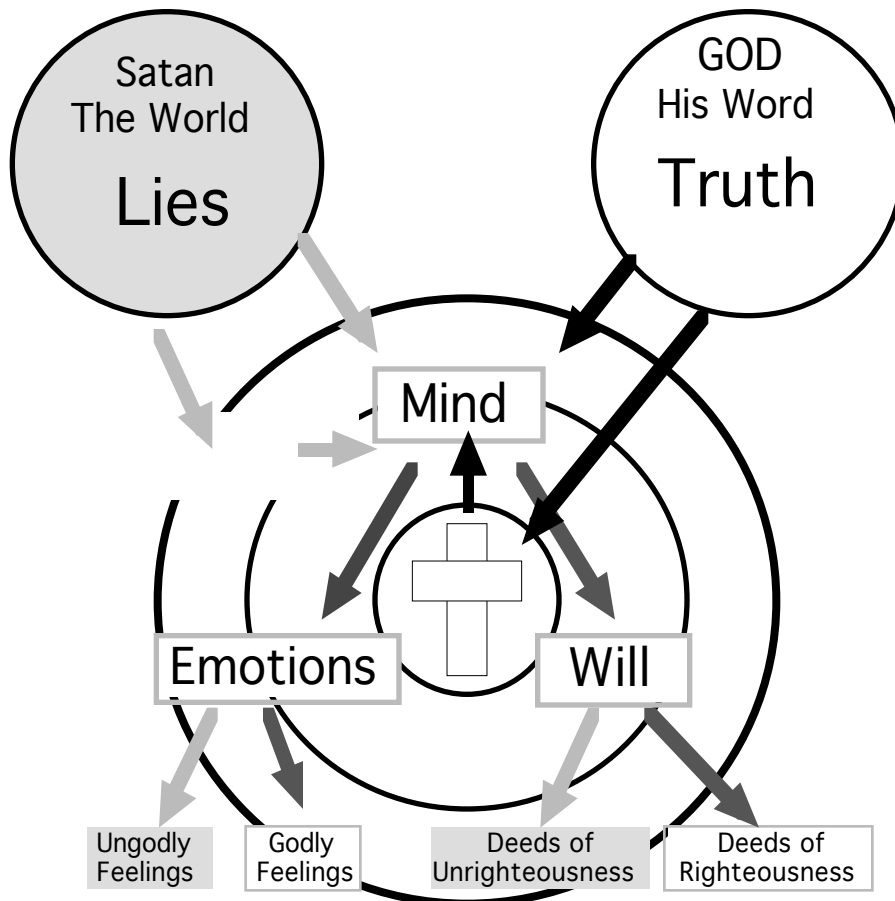
As you live in the Spirit, you may still find certain sins that cling to your life. They may be *habitual sins, ungodly thoughts, guilt inducing memories, bondage to fleshly lusts such as overeating, addictions, pornography, or sexual immorality, or a myriad of other things like these*. No matter how great your desire to follow Christ, these nagging sins entangle and weigh your spiritual life down like chains. Well, take heart, for *there is freedom through the resurrection power and authority of Jesus Christ!*



“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”
Galatians 5:11

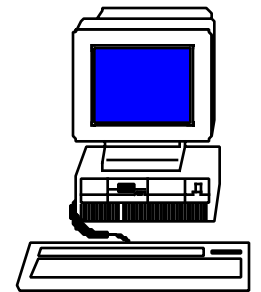
- ❖ Circle the *reason* we have been set free in Christ.
- ❖ Underline what the alternative to freedom is.

This diagram helps us understand the Nature of Spiritual Bondage.



 Galatians 5:13

► What are some common areas of bondage Christians experience?



Our **Minds** are like the Central Processing Unit of a Computer (an apt analogy since some of us operate at higher processing speeds than others!).

Satan's Lies and God's Truth are like the **Program** or Software that run the Computer. The Computer's operation depends on the Software being used.

If the Software is defective (Satan's Lies) the output will also be defective (ungodly feelings and deeds). But if the Software is perfect (God's Truth) the output will be as well (Godly Feelings and Deeds).

Beware of the 'Software' you put in your Mind!

The Nature of Spiritual Bondage

From the diagram on page 19

The **TWO SMALLER CIRCLES** represent two Spiritual Kingdoms under which we live. Make no mistake about it, ***you live either in subjection to Satan's Kingdom of Lies, or God's Kingdom of Truth.*** All of us were born under Satan's Kingdom (***Ephesians 2:1-3***), but were transformed and transferred to God's Kingdom the moment we trusted Christ to forgive our sins and give us eternal Life (***Colossians 1:13-14***)!

The **ARROWS** emanating from the circles represent their influencing forces upon our lives. Satan enslaves us through ***Lies and Fear***, while God liberates us by ***His Truth and Grace***. From the moment of our birth, ***these forces influence what we Think, Feel, and Do. Spiritual Bondage occurs when Satan's Lies gain a "foothold", or area of control, in our Minds and Bodies.*** Like ***barbed harpoons***, they enslave our thoughts and actions. These ***"harpoons"***, or ***"fiery darts"*** of Satan, must be ***identified*** and ***removed*** before we can be ***Spiritually Free in Christ.***

Note ~ Temptations in themselves are not Spiritual Bondage. It is the continual surrendering to them through Sin that creates our bondage to Satan's Kingdom. Like ruts on a worn road, Habitual Sins and False Beliefs become entrenched in our Lives making it difficult to escape.

OUR MIND is the center of the Battle for control of our lives, ***for it is the Mind that determines how we Feel and what we Do!*** That is the reason Satan targets us with his Lies, for if he can get us to believe them, he will have gained control of our lives completely unawares. This is why we are exhorted to set our Minds on things Godly!

OUR EMOTIONS are automatic responses to our Thoughts, ***whether or not these thoughts conform to reality.*** How many times have you laughed, cried, and gotten angry in the space of a few minutes while watching a movie? As our Minds accept the movie's plot and characters, even though fictitious, they affect our Emotions as though real. Therefore, to govern our Emotions, we must be in control of what we think!

OUR WILL controls our Deliberate Actions. We choose to Act based on what we think in our Minds! ***Ungodly Thoughts produce Deeds of Unrighteousness, while Godly Thoughts result in Deeds of Righteousness.*** The advertisers got it wrong. It isn't ***"You are what you eat."*** Rather, it is ***"You are what you Think!"***

"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

(Proverbs 23:7 NKJV)

▶ How does Scripture describe us before we became a Christian in ***Ephesians 2:1-3***?

▶ What happens when a person becomes a Christian according to ***Colossians 1:13-14***?

 2 Timothy 2:25-26

▶ How does 2 Timothy 2:25-26 describe Spiritual Bondage?

▶ What are the things we are told to think about in ***Colossians 3:1-2*** & ***Philippians 4:8***?

▶ Give examples of these things.

▶ How is television, movies, and other mass media harmful to our Minds? How can they be beneficial?

▶ How might a person Feel and Act if he is convinced in his Mind that:

- a. There is no God, no heaven or hell.
- b. Man is a product of the naturalistic process of Evolution.
- c. He is a good for nothing idiot who can do nothing right.
- d. There is a God who created all things and who is Sovereign over His Creation.
- e. God loves us and created us for a purpose.
- f. Jesus is the only way to God.
- g. Christians have been given authority and power over Satan.
- h. God and His Word is the ultimate source of Truth.

The Road to Spiritual Freedom

Dr. Neil Anderson writes that Spiritual Freedom is “the result of what [we] choose to believe, confess, forgive, renounce and forsake.”

Recall

Ask God to bring to your Mind **areas of your life where Satan and his Lies may have taken hold**. This Step is like **pulling weeds**. Unless you pull out the roots, the weed will grow back! Too often we confess the **Ungodly Emotions and Actions of Sin** (the parts we can see), but fail to deal with the **Wrong Thinking** that produced those emotions and actions (the roots). **Ask God to show you the ‘root’ of your problem! (Pray for God’s protection from Satan’s influence as you begin this exercise.)**

- ▶ **Any False Beliefs or Worldly Values adopted through other people, television, advertising, our culture, our upbringing, our education, etc.**
- ▶ **Involvement in any Occult or Cult activities in the past or present.** (Satanic Rituals, Witchcraft, Fortune Telling, Secret Ceremonies, etc.)
- ▶ **Anything you are habitually doing that is sinful.** (Sexual Immorality, Addictions, Eating Disorders, etc.)
- ▶ **Anything others have said to you, or about you, that have created False Perceptions that are not in line with what God says to be True about you.** (“You’re Stupid”, You’re Ugly”, You’re Good for Nothing”, etc.)
- ▶ **Any Attitude that you are presently harboring that is displeasing to God** (Pride, Rebelliousness, Unforgiveness, Critical Spirit, Jealousy, etc.)

Renounce

Individually Renounce each False Belief/Thought or Sinful Activity **we are committing with our Bodies** that God brings to your Mind. By the Authority you have in Christ, **Renounce Satan’s hold on your life! (Note: We cannot completely rid Sin’s presence from our lives because of the Sinful Nature within us. Until Christ returns and transforms our mortal bodies into spiritual bodies, we will always have a natural vulnerability and propensity toward Sin.)**

Release

Release any Anger, Bitterness or Malice **you may have toward another by making a list of people whom you believe have wronged you, and forgive each person individually! Our Anger only gives Satan a “foothold”, or an area of control, in our lives and enslaves us to bitterness! It is important not to give Satan a “foothold” in our lives for they eventually become “strongholds” from which he seeks to control us!**

Renew

Transformed lives do not come from getting more **Emotional** or having more **Willpower**. Rather **Transformed Lives** come from **Renewed Minds. Only by Renewing our Minds to how God thinks can we ever be assured of responding with Godly Emotions and Actions! Remember this:**

**We can either believe Satan’s Lies or God’s Truth.
The Choice is Ours!**

 *Matthew 28:18*

- ▶ How much authority do we possess in Christ according to Matthew 28:18?
- ▶ If we possess “all authority” in Christ, how much authority does Satan have against us who are in Christ?

 *Psalms 129:23-24*

- ▶ Why is it important to ask God to protect us as we “Recall” areas of our lives under Spiritual bondage?
- ▶ How does Satan’s hold on each of these areas of our lives impact our Spiritual lives?
- ▶ How and Why do False Beliefs, Values and Perceptions gain such a strong hold in our Minds?

 *Matthew 16:21-23
Matthew 28:18
Romans 12:1
1 Corinthians 15:35-44
2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

- ▶ Why is it important to **specifically** renounce False Beliefs and Sinful Activities?

 *Ephesians 4:26-27
2 Timothy 2:25-26
2 Corinthians 2:10-11
2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

- ▶ How does Satan “outwit us in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11? A Why is it so hard to forgive others?
- ▶ How can God forgiving our sins help us in forgiving others?

 *2 Corinthians 10:3-5
Romans 12:2*

- ▶ Using the chart on page 19, explain how renewing our Minds is the key to Transforming our lives.

Maintaining Your Spiritual Freedom

Dealing with entrenched sinful thoughts and actions is only the *beginning* of a lifelong journey to experience *Spiritual Freedom in Christ*. The enemy is ever seeking ways to enslave us in sin in order to destroy our witness and, ultimately, the witness of Christ's Church of which we are all a part! Below are some suggestions to help maintain your Spiritual Freedom!

Walk in the Light of God!

The Schemes and Lies of the Enemy cannot overcome the "Light" of God. When tempted by *False Beliefs* or *Sin*, immediately shine the Light of God's Truth on them and expose them for the Lies they are. *Renounce the Lie and Affirm God's Truth! For example, if someone puts you down, immediately renounce that putdown and affirm that you are a Child of God (John 1:12)! If you are tempted by sexual thoughts, immediately renounce those thoughts and affirm that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit belonging to God (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)! Respond with God's Truth to all attempts by Satan to enslave you, and capture every sinful thought to make it obedient to Christ!*

Walk in the Armor of God!

Make no mistake about it, we are at war! T-shirts, shorts and rubber slippers may be sufficient for a stroll on Maui's beaches, but Spiritual Warfare demands Spiritual Weapons, able to repel every "fiery dart" of our enemy. *Our battle armor is the Helmet of Salvation, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Shield of Faith, the Belt of Truth, the Shoes of the Gospel, the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and Prayer!*

Walk in the Grace of God!

One of Satan's most effective schemes is *accusing Believers of their failures*. He seeks to replace our *Spiritual Freedom* with *Spiritual Guilt* by deceiving us into believing we are unworthy of God's acceptance. The Truth is "*there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*"! What does this mean? It means that *when we trust Jesus to forgive our sins, God clothes us with the righteousness of Christ Himself, adopting us as His own child, and now forever loves us with the same love He has for His own Beloved Son! When God looks at us, He sees us as He does His own Son! THAT IS GRACE!*

*"Then you will know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH will set you free."
"Sanctify Them by the TRUTH; Your Word is TRUTH."
(John 8:32 & 17:17)*

This Lesson may prove difficult for some people. *If you require help in applying these principles, see your Pastor and share your desire to be Spiritually Free in Christ.*

Excellent Reading

"Victory Over the Darkness" & "The Bondage Breaker" by Neal T. Anderson
"The Steps to Freedom in Christ" by Neal T. Anderson



1 John 1:5-10
Matthew 4:1-11
Philippians 4:8
2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- ▶ What Truth would you have responded with in Genesis 3:4-5?
- ▶ Describe your life if you Walked in God's light continually and made your every thought obedient to Christ.



Ephesians 6:10-18
1 Peter 5:8

- ▶ Describe how each piece of armor protects us from being ensnared by Satan.



Romans 8:1
John 17:23
2 Corinthians 5:21

- ▶ What kind of life results from believing we are "unworthy of God's acceptance"? How might this person view others?
- ▶ How does God's Grace protect us from being ensnared by Satan?

A Prayer

"Father God, thank you for the freedom we have through Christ, and for the authority we have in Christ to renounce every work of Satan in our lives. I affirm the Truth of Your Word, and commit myself to renew my Mind continually that I might think Your thoughts and do Your Will! In Christ's Name, Amen!