

Appendix B

Repentance: *Who, What, When, Why and How*

Repentance means to change one's mind about something, to rethink, and implies both sorrow over sin and that we are sincere about forsaking it. Genuine repentance is preceded by what the Bible calls godly sorrow and is followed by godly fruit. If either is lacking, we will very likely fall into the same sin again, perhaps multiple times. Godly sorrow is true grief over offending our Creator whose approval we cherish as opposed to mere regret because of painful consequences. Our hearts have to be broken over our sin and shame. This is most effectively accomplished when we repent publicly, to our church, a small accountability group or to another brother or sister in the faith. This is a painful, sometimes humiliating process, but a necessary one. When we repent only to God we can easily distance ourselves from the shame and guilt, but when we tell another, the full force of our sin comes crashing down on us. This is why we are told to confess our sins to one another. (James 5:16)

Unfortunately the church has all but abandoned this practice in favor of silent and private confession directly to God. Even at the point of conversion we rarely require public confession. This is unfortunate, leaving the penitent person with a diminished sense of their own degradation. Jesus said he who is forgiven much loves much. But if we are hiding our sin, not admitting the depths to which we have fallen, we will not experience the heights of relief and freedom that Jesus offers.

In addition, public confession levels the playing field in the church, making it clear that we are all in need of correction, accountability, and training in righteousness.¹ It eliminates delusions of grandeur, defuses messiah complexes, reinforces the brotherhood of all believers and guards against the development of a caste system or hierarchy in which the most godly lord it over the sinners. True, we do grow as we persevere in faith, and hopefully sin less and less as time goes

¹ We are not suggesting here that people confess the sordid details of their sin nor that they confess indiscriminately to men and women alike, or to children. One should be cautious about whom one chooses as a confidant(e) and should not give graphic details of the sin (which might fuel other's battles with temptation).

by. And our leaders are expected, biblically speaking, to be above reproach. But too often those in leadership are put there because of their credentials and education, not because of their godly character, and when they fail, they hide their sin in order to maintain their position, income and reputation. This is a tragedy in the church. Do we not have men within our ranks who can fill the role of elders and teachers because of their character and time spent with God and His Word? Men we know, whose lives are an open book to us? No, we go and hire those who are not known to us at all, and then are surprised when we discover that they have fallen victim to this charade of propriety.

It's interesting to note that, in both John the Baptist and Jesus' ministries, people came confessing their sins and then were baptized. We don't know if they confessed privately to the baptizer alone (or to Jesus or John) or more publicly to the assembled crowd, but in any case, they confessed to someone, and we should not forego this exquisite tool of repentance. It is God's gift to bring us to full surrender and to motivate us not to sin again. None of us finds confession enjoyable in the short term, but in the end it does its work of correction.²

So we exhort you to find someone with whom you can be candid; someone with whom you can share mutual accountability. This will go a long way toward protecting you from the snare of hidden sin. Humility is well worth cultivating. If you find yourself hiding your sin for fear that you will never amount to anything in the church, surrender your ambition to God and let Him exalt you at the proper time. Too many young men who aspire to leadership are put there long before they are qualified by sanctification and maturity, and someone needs to stand up and say no; we need godly leaders of proven character. Men who, like Moses and Daniel, did not ambitiously aspire to leadership (as a compensation for their own insecurity and low self-esteem), but whose humility qualified them to positions of trust, even though they sinned.

² If we are committed to faith and repentance and know that, should we sin again, we will have to come before the body again and confess, it helps motivate us to resist sin. No one likes to humiliate himself. Of course, hopefully, this is not our only motivation to resist sin. Ideally our love for God and that alone would motivate us. Sadly however, that is not often the case, especially in the early years of our walk.

WHO?

All believers should repent as they are convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit. They should repent to God when the sin is private (although it is appropriate at times to acknowledge such sins to others as well) and repent to the appropriate person or persons when the sin is more public. We should also acknowledge when we've been injured by another, first by going to that person and in meekness sharing the offense. If the brother or sister repents and the relationship is restored, we've won our brother.

If we see our brother sinning and not changing direction, we should approach him in humility with what we've witnessed. If he repents, wonderful. If not, we should take two or three others and again confront his sin. If he does not repent, we take it before the church. If he still does not listen, then we are to put him out of the church. (Matt. 18:15-17) We are not to ignore sin in the camp. We should, however, do our best to distinguish between deliberate ongoing heinous sin and simple immaturity or an occasional failure. We do not point out every flaw or failure in our children or we will discourage them to the point of hopelessness. But we do confront outright rebellion and disobedience and we should in our fellow believers as well

WHAT?

We repent for whatever the Holy Spirit convicts us of. Some of us have a weak conscience and we feel guilty over anything and everything we do. Sometimes the guilt is not true guilt, but is actually condemnation from the enemy. It is important that we learn to make that distinction or we will be run into the ground and lose all joy and hope. A hint: God convicts us *before* we sin, as well as after. The devil *condemns* us, but only *after* we sin. He *wants* us to sin, but he also wants to rub our faces in it.

WHEN?

We should repent as soon as we become aware of a violation, or as soon as possible afterward. It is always possible to repent to God immediately (unless we are rebellious, unaware or in denial), and this is the best course. The devil will not get a foothold if we repent immediately and

that is important. In that case, a simple acknowledgment and apology to God, agreeing with His conviction and assessment will often suffice, unless there needs to be restitution—depending on the seriousness of the sin, of course. A serious sin reveals a deeper deficit of character that should be addressed with a godly mentor.

Jesus said, “Be angry but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. And do not give the devil a foothold.” Even though this is the only recorded instance of Jesus saying this, it is not likely that anger is the only emotion or sin that qualifies for this injunction. Any sinful emotion or act left unrepented will permit the devil to gain access to our heart and mind. But sometimes there may be a lag before we can repent directly to an injured party. In those cases we should immediately repent to God and repent to the person as soon as possible. This will prevent the devil from getting his foot in our life. Otherwise we give him a base of operations from which he will launch other attacks on our heart and mind.

WHY?

As stated above, repentance not only brings us and our sin under the blood atonement of Jesus, but it also removes any legal right the devil might have gained in our lives. Footholds are like little ledges that allow the devil and demons to hang onto us and start exerting pernicious control over our thought life, with temptations, suggestions, judgments, condemnation, lies and harassment. Granted, even the most perfect and pure person will experience temptation as Jesus did, but tormenting thoughts, repeated unwanted images, and unrelenting temptation is the inheritance of those who have given the devil ground.

Most of us have already given him lots of these footholds and as long as he feels confident that he has us under his thumb, we may never know he's there. But once a person begins to really obey Jesus, and really believe the truth about repentance, you can bet your bottom-dollar that the devil or his demons will begin tormenting them on whatever ground they are encamped, doing their level-best to get the person to return to sin, or to become hopeless about their sanctification

(or salvation). Ultimately they aim to convince a person in this condition to give up on the whole of the Christian life.³ Once a person becomes truly backslidden, it is much more difficult for them to come back to the Church and the life of surrendered obedience.

Demons have assignments and they are assigned based on the sins we commit. If we commit sexual sin and do not repent, we gain a sexually exploitative demon, one that will fill us with lewd thoughts, suggestions, and constant guilt and harassment. If we are a worrier, we will gain a demon that will fill us with fearful thoughts, what-ifs, and dark fantasies. If we are judgmental, we will gain a demon that will place judgmental and critical thoughts into our minds, and constant comparison of ourselves with others will dominate our hearts. And so on. So we are wise if we repent immediately and do not allow the devil any grasping point in our lives.

HOW?

We hope we've made the case for immediate confession and repentance. If you practice this and have since your conversion, a simple acknowledgment of sin and request for forgiveness should suffice (assuming you are not deliberately and repeatedly committing the same sin).⁴ However, if we have already allowed a lot of footholds in our hearts, which many of us have even after coming to faith, we may find ourselves battling demons that do not want to let go. What's that about?

The fact is, demons gain legal rights when we sin, especially when we sin knowingly and deliberately and repeatedly, and particularly if we don't repent immediately. And they will hang onto any shred of legality they can claim in order to keep their ground. God Himself allows them to stay when they have legal justification. But we do not have to remain captive to the devil and

³ Yes, Jesus said He would not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but with the temptation would provide a way of escape, that we might be able to bear it. That "way of escape" is Jesus Himself (the Way). We call out to Him for help (which He will provide immediately), but if we are not diligently trying to live the life Christ calls us to, we will rarely think to call on Him in the moment of temptation. Unfortunately, our own strength is seldom sufficient.

⁴ Jesus tells his apostles, "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." (Luke 17:3,4) The key here is that he repents, and we know this means sincere repentance. Our point here is that deliberate willful sin over and over implies that the repentance is not sincere.

his demons. There are ways to release ourselves from their grasp. This is only true, however, for those who are in Christ and who know (and truly believe) there is authority in His name.⁵

Guidelines for Confession and Repentance

For those who have not made a regular habit of confession and repentance and who feel they are under harassment from the enemy, we would suggest the following practices:

- 1) A good place to start is to go to God (get away alone) and ask Him to remind you of those sins you have not dealt with. Then begin writing them down. Start as far back as you can remember. You may run to several pages. Arranging the sins into categories may help (sexual sin, rebellion, lying, stealing, slander/gossip, hatred, vengeance, disobedience to parents, etc.) The purpose of this exercise is to “clean house” or “clear the deck,” so that you can then live with a simple policy of ongoing repentance. Once you feel you have a solid list, make a time to sit down (preferably in the company of another person, a mature believer⁶ if possible) and go through the list item-by-item or category by category. Take your time. It may take several hours or sessions. That’s okay. Start out by:

- a. **Submitting the time to God.** Remind yourself that God is perfect and that all sin is rebellion against the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive Officer and the Commander-in-Chief of the Universe. There is no room for disagreement with God. Submit the time to God and to His authority, perspective and correction.
Pray in your own words.

If you need help, here is a **Sample Prayer**: Father God, I submit this time to you for Your holy purposes. I ask You to take authority over my heart and mind. I submit them to You. I choose to agree with You regarding sin and my own sins in particular. I ask You to reveal to me the real nature of my sin and help me to own it and repent from a place of

⁵ If this is not you, you may need substantial help from a mature brother or sister in the faith who understands the spiritual realm and their authority in it.

⁶ Do not choose someone who does not also know they are a sinner. If they are not humble, transparent and willing to also confess their sins to you at times, I would suggest choosing someone else. You do not want someone who is on an ego-trip, or who already feels superior. That will only add to their delusion and dysfunction.

godly sorrow. I want to please you now and be found pleasing to You from this day forward. Guide me in this process so that every hidden sin will be revealed. Please come now by Your Spirit and help me to surrender everything to You and to walk according to Your ways.

- b. **Bind** the devil from blinding, confusing, distracting or blocking your memory of sins or deceiving you about the nature of your sin or the effectiveness of repentance. Do this in the name of the true Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ If any thoughts come to you such as “*This will never work,*” or “*God can’t forgive me,*” reject them as faithless. If you do not believe them, they cannot gain power over you. It is preferable to pray in your own words, but for those who need help, here is a

Sample Prayer:

In the name of the true Lord Jesus Christ, I bind Satan and all of his demons from involvement in this process today. I forbid any blinding or blocking or deaf and dumb spirits from interfering with what God wants to reveal to me today. I bind off any spirits of confusion, distraction, delusion or deception and forbid your input. I forbid any demon from speaking anything into my heart or mind except by the express permission and instruction of the true Lord Jesus Christ. I command all spirits not here by the express permission of the true Lord Jesus Christ to leave my presence now and go to the feet of Jesus. I command any spirits that are allowed to remain in my presence by the true Lord Jesus to speak the truth and nothing but the truth as determined by Jesus. I forbid any replacer spirits or replacer assignments and I bind off any retaliatory attacks against me or any other person, place or thing for the work I am doing here today. In Jesus’ name. Amen.⁸

⁷ Demons sometimes take the name of Jesus and can respond to prayer prayed in Jesus’ name. It is important to, from time to time, make the demonic world aware that you are speaking only in the name of the one true Lord Jesus Christ, creator of the universe and Son of God.

⁸ This last sentence is very important. Demons will get angry when you begin walking in your authority in Christ. They will often try to discourage that activity by various kinds of attacks and torments, including physical aches and pains. If you do not bind them off at the beginning and at the end of your prayer sessions, you may find yourself experiencing

Confess, Repent, Renounce, Replace, Release, Receive,

Resist, Restore, Reclaim, Restrict, Resolve, Make Restitution

This may seem like a burdensome list when Scripture merely tells us to Repent. The fact is, Scripture also tells us to confess, resist, receive, renew, resolve and make restitution. Just not all in the same place. The purpose of this list is to help you understand the legal and spiritual aspects of the spirit realm and to cooperate with God in breaking their hold on you. Once you understand this process, you will do it more or less automatically. Do the following for each sin or category of sin (naming the incidents as God brings them to mind⁹):

- c. **Confess** the sin specifically (but without the gruesome details if someone is listening, particularly for sexual sin). First, try to get yourself in touch with the gravity of the offense. Talk out loud and tell God how sorry you are that you violated His standards, His word, and His expectations for each incident or category of incidents on your list. Let your emotions flow. Admit your motives, your weakness, your failure, selfishness, greed, or carnality. Own it all.
- d. **Repent:** Tell Him how much you want to please Him and that your heart is broken over your sin. The more you are able to get in touch with your feelings on the matter, the deeper and more complete your healing will be. If you only repent from your head, you may find yourself still wallowing in guilt and shame. Identify the lies you have believed that led you to engage in this sin. Ask Him to help you to change.
- e. **Renounce** your agreement (or contract) with the devil and his lies in this matter. (All sin creates an alliance with the devil. When we agree with or surrender to his lies and authority, we make ourselves his slave. Repentance breaks that agreement, especially when we specifically identify and renounce the lies we

their ire, which can take many forms (including nightmares, physical illness, pain, accidents, losses, attacks on your loved ones, possessions, job, or in tormenting thoughts, particularly if they have legal ground in your life).

⁹ Be as detailed as you think God wants you to be, but if you are doing this in the presence of another person, be careful not to be too graphic, possibly creating fuel for the enemy to use in their lives. Only do this with a mature believer.

believed that led to the sin.) Also renounce any lies you have believed as a *result* of this sin. Name the lies. Be specific. Break your agreement with these delusions and deceptions. Otherwise they will keep you in bondage and cause you to fall victim to this sin again. Renounce your agreement with any rationalizations. There may be more than one lie for each sin. Ask God to show you what they are if you don't know. Say something like: "Lord, I renounce my agreement with the lie that..... I ask you to forgive me for believing and receiving the enemy's deceptions. I reject this lie right now in Jesus' name."

- f. **Replace the lie with truth:** If you don't know the truth, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you. State the truth regarding this issue in your life (usually the opposite of the lie). Own it. Get God's heart on it. "Lord, I take back the truth that....."
- g. **Release** any other person involved in this sin from your judgment, condemnation or anger, whether they participated with you, enticed you or were enticed *by* you to sin. Ask God to forgive you for any part you played in corrupting them. Tell God you forgive them if they corrupted or influenced you, or if they encouraged or went along with you. Ask God to forgive them, too, and pray a prayer of blessing over them. Ask God to restore them to Himself and bless their life with overflowing goodness. This is a good time to forgive any ancestor whose influence or example may have led you to this sin or whose genetic endowment may have caused you to be weak in a particular area (i.e., alcoholism).
- h. **Receive:** Ask God to forgive your sin entirely and to wipe the slate clean. Ask Him to justify you and cleanse you as if you'd never committed that offense. Receive His forgiveness and thank Him for forgiving you and for dying on the cross so that you could be allowed into His heaven.
- i. **Resist** the devil: Bind the devil and any demons that gained a foothold in your life because of this sin. Send the demons associated with this sin to the feet of Jesus. Break any assignment or curse that has been lodged against you

because of this sin and send those broken assignments to the foot of the cross. (You have this authority only if you are a blood-bought believer in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice and resurrection.) Do this in the name of the true Lord Jesus Christ. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to issue restraining orders in the heavenly realms against any higher level demonic or celestial spirits that were involved in this sin and to break all linkages in the spirit between them and you.

- j. **Restore and Surrender:** Take back any ground in your heart that had been ceded to the enemy because of this sin. Ask the Holy Spirit to come now and fill that ground with His permanent indwelling presence. (You do not want to leave unoccupied territory in your heart.)
- k. **Reclaim** all the benefits that were lost to you because of this sin: peace, joy, contentment, hope, purity of mind and heart, etc. Ask God to fill you with His peace and confidence that you are truly cleansed and made right with Him.
- l. **Restrict** the enemy from “any retaliatory attacks against yourself or any other person, place or thing for these prayers or the work you are doing.” The devil gets mad when we take his ground away, and sometimes will lash out at us, especially if he still has other ground or open doors from which to operate in our lives. Do not get too specific with the devil. If you start naming things that you bind him off of, he may take it as license to afflict anything that you *do not* name. This is a good general statement that leaves no open doors. Do this in the name of the true Lord Jesus Christ.
- m. **Resolve** not to commit this sin again.
- n. **Restitution:** Make any appropriate restitution for any sin you committed and ask forgiveness of anyone you wronged (unless your confession will subject them to more serious injury).¹⁰

¹⁰ For example, if you had an affair with a married man, confessing to his wife that you injured her might cause the breakup of her marriage and injure her children irreparably. Please use wisdom.

Continue to seek God's active participation in this process

- 2) After you have made it through your list of sins, ask God to continue to bring to mind other offenses you may have forgotten during the coming days. If He does, deal with them the same way.¹¹

Forgive Others

- 3) Now make a list of people who have sinned *against you*. Go as far back as you are led to go. This, too, may amount to several pages. Then do the following:
 - a. **Submit** your efforts to God. Ask Him to shepherd you through the process so that you will not sin or offend anyone as you seek reconciliation. If He leads you to alter the order of these steps, do so. There may be a good reason for it.
 - b. Deal with the emotions of the offense. **Pour out** your complaint to God regarding this person's sin. Tell God exactly how you feel about what was done to you or not done. Get in touch with your emotions on the subject and be as honest as you can. Then listen to God as He shows you the truth. He may point out some aspect you hadn't recognized or some part you played in the incident. Be prepared to **repent**, and do so if this happens, because it probably will.
 - c. **Renounce** any lies you have believed because of this offense. Break any agreements with the devil. The devil will plant lies into a wound which, if believed, will cause it to fester and become infected with blame, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, hatred. If this has happened, confess these attitudes as sin and break your agreement with them. Take back any ground that was held by these

¹¹ In our opinion, it is not necessary to confess to another person the fact that you don't enjoy or get on with them. This is not sin unless the reason is related to jealousy, judgment, or some other sinful attitude or if you have acted on your feelings to harm the person in some way. If it is, repent of the attitude. If you are holding ill will toward another brother for no apparent reason, or because of a personality quirk or other idiosyncrasy, and you choose to deal directly with this, make sure you acknowledge it as your problem, not theirs unless they've sinned against you. Ask their forgiveness if appropriate. If it is simply a matter of personality differences, you can still exercise grace, love and kindness without expecting the person to be a close friend. On the other hand, most people, once we get to know their personal struggles, are fairly likable. Make the effort. We are called to live in Christian brotherhood and love. Act in love, even if you don't feel like it. Ask God to give you His heart for that person. Occasionally we will react badly to a person because they have a familiar spirit, one that we've borne or wrestled with in the past. This can make it very difficult to be near that person until the spirit is exorcised. If you suspect this to be the case, you might attempt to bind the spirit or force it to stay outside during your interaction with the person and see if it makes any difference. I have done this and it worked, but it made the devil really angry. If you do this, be sure to bind off any retaliatory attacks against yourself or any other person, place or thing for that prayer.

lying spirits and ask the Holy Spirit to take possession of that ground, filling it with His presence.

- d. **Take back the truth.** Replace these lies you have believed with the truth God shows you. This will help to reprogram your mind and also to plant good seed in the ground that you have just pulled the weeds out of. Ask God to seal these truths into your mind and heart.
- e. **Release** this person from your debt and your judgment. (They owe you, even though it's a pittance compared to what you owe God.) Hand over the gavel of judgment to God and tell Him that you trust Him to make the proper decision regarding the disposition of this case. You could say something like this: "You be the judge God. I entrust this offense to You. I release it and I release my right to take vengeance or make accusation. I know You will give this person what they deserve. If they repent, You will give them mercy. If they don't, You will judge them rightly. I don't have to carry this anymore. I release them and their sin against me into Your hands to do with as You think best. I pray that they may receive Your abundant mercy. I release all anger, hatred, judgment, self-righteousness and vengeance from my heart, mind *and* body. I take back health and wholeness in my soul and body. Amen."
- f. **Bless** this person, asking God to heal their heart, change them and bring them to repentance.
- g. If led by the Holy Spirit (very important), **Go** to the person and tell them how they hurt you. Make sure your motives are pure before you confront them. Do so only with a meek and humble heart, knowing you too have sinned. (This is one reason we suggest doing all the previous steps first. It helps to clean out the heart and make the approach easier.) If they repent, you will have reconciliation. If they do not and they are in the church and if the sin is fairly serious, take two or three others with you and present your case again. If they repent, you have won your

brother. If the sin is quite serious and they do not repent, you may need to take it to your elders, but this should be limited to the more serious violations.

Keep Short Accounts

4) Now that you have cleaned house, continue to keep short accounts with God from here on out. When you are convicted of sin before the fact, turn around! When you are convicted after the fact (or did not pay attention to or misread the initial conviction) repent immediately and change course. Make restitution if possible and ask for forgiveness from those you have offended.

HABITS OF MIND:

Fear, Worry, Despair, Judgment, Anger, Vengeance, Covetousness, Lust, Deception

When you notice that you are not walking in faith but fear, repent and ask God to forgive you. Fear is the opposite of faith and is its enemy. Sometimes we have such habits of mind for so many years that detection of the enemy is difficult. Do this with other habits of mind as well. Ask God to make you aware of Satan's attacks immediately and then resist. "Satan, I see you. The Scriptures say 'Be anxious for nothing.' I renounce fear and worry. I resist you in the name of the true Lord Jesus Christ. Be gone now!" Evict the enemy and take back the ground. Do this until it becomes second nature. The devil will continue to try to get back into his old haunting ground, knowing that your weak areas are most vulnerable to repeated attack. If you are firm in your resolve to resist him, he will eventually be reduced to frontal assaults that are fairly easily discerned.

After going through this process, you should feel a definite lifting of guilt, shame, grief and alienation. You should feel like your fellowship with God is clearer or restored. Remember, it's a process and may take some time to get to the bottom of things, especially if you've been sinning for a long time without repenting, or if you've backslidden.

SEXUAL SIN, OCCULTISM

Some sins and offenses, such as those in which you have joined yourself illicitly to another person or been involved in the occult or in Satanic rituals may require further work. Don't give up. There is hope for complete deliverance. Stay the course. There is also lots of good resource material out there in Christian bookstores on how to deal with the enemy. You will know if this has been successful by the level of peace you feel. If you feel peace, your work has been effective. However, the devil may still attempt to regain his old ground. He may wait six months and then return with another attempt in the same area. If you resist him, he will flee. If unsuccessful, he may later try a new tack. Be on your toes. The devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Use the armor of faith and the Word of God. (See Ephesians 6.)

If after all this work is completed to the best of your ability, you still do not have peace in your heart or in your relationship with God or if you are still under attack from the devil on a regular and unrelenting basis, or if you feel split (like a double-minded man), it may mean that there is a hidden sin, or a sin that occurred in your early years in which you were violated without your permission, or even with your permission but innocently. This can still give ground to the enemy.¹² Ask God to reveal any such hidden sin and deal with it appropriately. If you need help, ask God to lead you to a deliverance worker or a brother or sister in the faith who has experience in this area.

GENERATIONAL SIN AND CURSES

Last but not least, there is such as thing as generational sin and curses. This comprises sinful attitudes and propensities as well as curses of all kinds that come down to us from our ancestors. Ancestral demons can actually, believe it or not, transfer onto us at birth or conception, waiting for their first opportunity to gain a legal foothold. As soon as we sin in like manner, they take advantage and begin their work of corruption and distortion. This sounds like a wacky statement, I

¹² The devil does not play by the rules. He will use the fact that your body was involved in a sin, even if against your own will, to gain a foothold in you. This is particularly the case for young children who are violated sexually. Since we are too young to cry out to God or to say "No!" the devil justifies his incursion into our heart and mind, though it is via a legal loophole. He doesn't care about righteousness remember. God, on the other hand, will never violate our will. He does not "take over" our hearts without an invitation.

know, but it's true.¹³ Parents, grandparents or great grandparents who were involved in the occult, Free Masonry, false religions, nature worship, Satanism, Spiritism, murder, witchcraft, idolatry, drug abuse, alcoholism, adultery, homosexuality, pedophilia, bestiality and other forms of perversion leave us open to the influence of these demons. We may also inherit other tendencies from our ancestors (even without ever having met them) such as worry, fear, self-condemnation, vanity, selfish ambition, depression, insecurity. We can renounce our agreement with these demons as well, and with our ancestors' sins.¹⁴ Demons who have had ground in our family tree do not give it up if they can find any way to legally keep it. Whatever their assignment, they will try to foment that same sin in subsequent generations to give them a legal right to stay and to cause a wound into which they can pour their venom. Go through and break off any sins you are aware of that have come down the family line from your ancestors. Renounce your agreement with those sins or lies. Repent of any ways that you have acted out these generational sins. Be sure to forgive your ancestors for their untoward influence. Take back your original design and health. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill your released ground with His presence. Some of these deliverance processes may take time if there are layers of demons resident in a person, especially if they are there from birth.¹⁵ Don't give up. That's what they are hoping you will do.

RELIGIOUS SPIRITS

Demons often seem to "go after" a child in the family who demonstrates more spiritual sensitivity than the others. If there is a "religious spirit" operating in the family tree, it will usually choose this child to harass. They are less likely to bother with a child who is rebellious by nature because that child doesn't need any help to go astray, although they will certainly take advantage of any ground they are given. As we said, they don't like to be unclothed. But if they can't get a hold on

¹³ I have some dear friends who have been doing deliverance work for over 20 years. They told me that in every case that they can remember, when a person was inhabited by a demon or demons, the spirits had been there since conception or birth, or "from the beginning." This is by the demons' own admission when bound to the truth by the true Lord Jesus Christ. You can usually see the evidence of these same demons operating in the parents or grandparents if they are still alive.

¹⁴ For more information on this subject, check out your local Christian bookstore or go online and search for "demonic deliverance" or "dealing with generational sin" sites.

¹⁵ People who have been Satanically ritually abused, for example, can have splits and alters and parts operating in a complex conspiracy to keep the person from wholeness and freedom.

you any other way, they will even use one's sensitivity to God as an entry point if they can skew it sideways, into a cult or a works mentality or obsessive religiosity or martyrdom. Religious spirits must be renounced and broken off¹⁶ just like other spirits.

DEMONIC HIERARCHIES

Demons also operate on a hierarchical basis. The first demon to take ground acts as the kingpin and he will invite other demons to join him as the ground becomes available. When the deliverance process begins, the kingpin will shove all the other demons forward to be evicted while doing everything possible to retain its foundational ground. Like peeling an onion, the work proceeds layer by layer, until all the demons have been exposed. A core stronghold will often be at the root, and may comprise two or three demons that usually work as a team. For example, fear, shame and control often go together, coming in on the heels of an early sexual violation. Fear is often the last to go. But once you are free, there is great relief from the symptoms and more victory over temptation. There is no dearth of information on this subject if you explore your Christian bookstore or online.

We hope this has been helpful. Take this seriously and you will find your Christian life exhibiting more and more power and fruit as you walk in greater victory. Remember, Paul commanded us to be filled with the Spirit. And to clean out the old leaven. This is how to do it.

¹⁶ Evidence of a religious spirit would be a life characterized by such things as making shrines, cherishing religious objects, obsessive praying of rote prayers, wearing religious paraphernalia, reading the lives of the saints, self-flagellation, wearing clothing obviously designed to be penitential, worshipping at statues or icons, revering religious leaders inappropriately, self-righteous attitudes, failure to recognize one's own sin, etc.