

## Section Three:

### Personal Spiritual Conflict: The Battle for the Mind

### Introduction

At least three primary theaters of spiritual conflict may be identified: the mind, our holiness, and our service. Diagram 1 illustrates the interaction of these areas as well as showing the major goals of Satan to disrupt us in each of them. We will explore these theaters in the next sections. Aspects of spiritual conflict relevant for this discussion include:

1. **Focusing our attention** on the unchallenged sovereignty of God in all of earthly and heavenly affairs.
2. **Recognizing our human responsibility** to live the Christian life as God intends it, including the practice of the **spiritual disciplines** (e.g., putting on the armor of God).

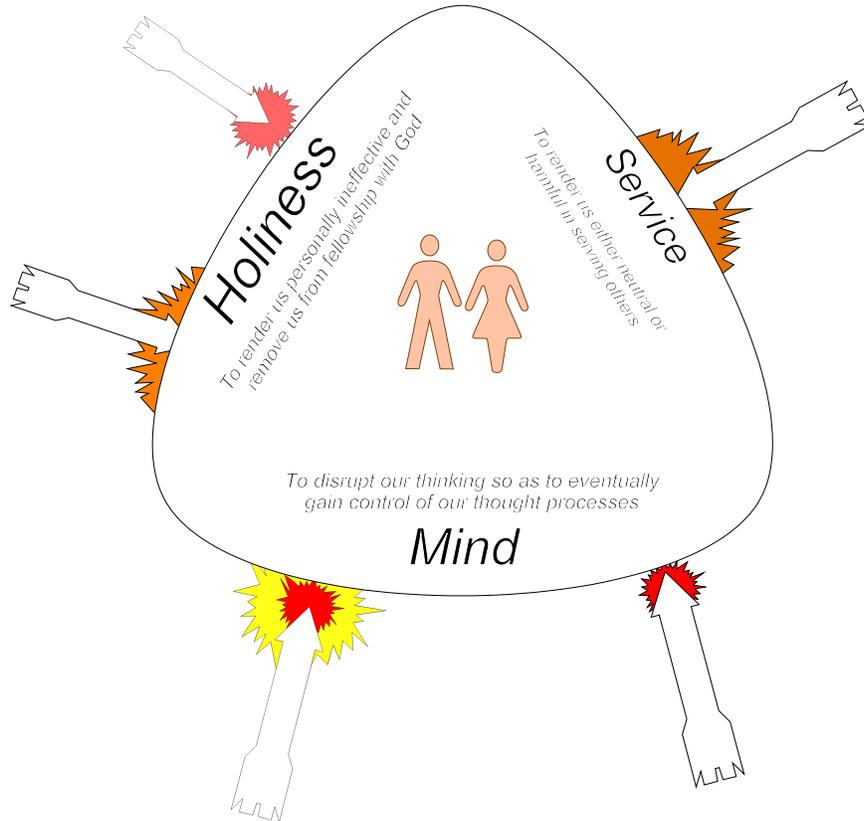


Diagram 1: The Theaters of Spiritual Conflict

In this section we will examine the theater of the mind as the main battleground for personal spiritual conflict. What do I mean by the term "mind"? Diagram 2 shows three aspects related to our ability as creatures made in God's image to think, choose, and feel:

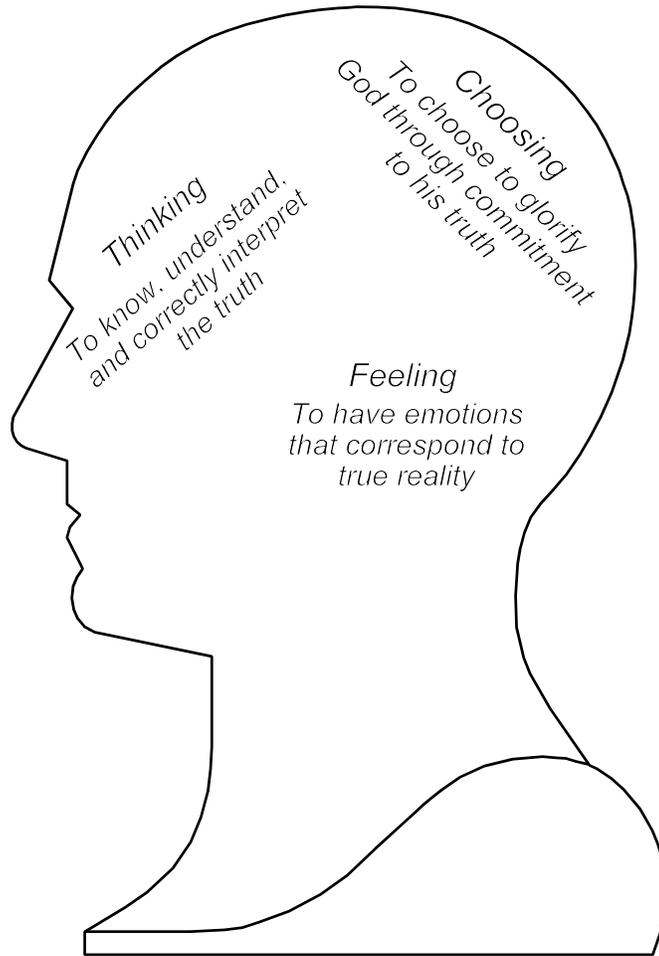


Diagram 2: Spiritual Conflict in the Mind

In the following working chart, I indicate three mutually interrelated and interlocking aspects, none of which is independent of the others. This chart forms the outline for this section in the course.

	The <i>Thinking</i> Mind (Intellect)	The <i>Choosing</i> Mind (Will)	The <i>Feeling</i> Mind (Heart)
Basic Function	Learn, think, know, understand, interpret	Choose	Experience (emotions)
Satan would have us . . .	Ignore the truth. Distort the truth. Allow any thoughts we have free air time.	Make choices based on sinful habit rather than reflection. Deny or ignore our ability to choose. Choose some form of a distortion of the truth.	Deny or suppress. Express inappropriately. Think either "feelings are all" or "no feelings at all."
God would have us . . .	Know, understand, and correctly interpret the truth in order to renew the mind.	Choose to glorify God through commitment to His truth.	Have emotions that correspond to true reality.
Spiritual Disciplines to Cultivate	Learn, study, memorize, and meditate on God's Word.  Knowledge of basic truths	Choose right "programming" based on the truth.  Exercise our choosing ability by:  Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.  Loving others as we love ourselves.  Resisting Satan.	Handle the full range of emotions properly.  Deal with negative emotions.  Enjoy positive emotional experiences.

### The *Thinking* Mind

Basic Function	Learn, think, know, understand, interpret
Satan would have us . . .	Ignore the truth. Distort the truth. Allow any thoughts we have free air time.
The Framework of Spiritual Warfare	Know, understand, and correctly interpret the truth in order to renew the mind
Spiritual Disciplines to Cultivate	* Learn, study, memorize, and meditate on God's Word * Knowledge of basic truths (including God's sovereignty, glory, character, and priorities; our nature as people, identity as Christians, and authority as Christ's followers; our responsibilities in spiritual conflict [e.g., knowing about the armor God gives]; Satan's character, schemes, tactics, and agents; the nature and ministry of God's holy angels)

Personal spiritual conflict begins at the level of our thought life. We must be thinking appropriately in spiritual conflict if we hope to live in the light of Christ's victory over Satan on the cross. Essentially, Satan would have us ignore or distort the truth by giving all thoughts we have "free air time." Our task is to know, understand, and correctly interpret the truth in order to renew the mind. The basic framework of spiritual conflict in our thought processes is focused on **knowing and understanding correctly the truth**. The spiritual disciplines we are to cultivate in regard to our thought processes include (but are not limited to):

1. **Immerse ourselves in the Word of God** through learning, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture.
  - a. Some basic truths about God's Word and the consequences of those truths may be noted from Psalm 19:7-11:

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.  
 The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.  
 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.  
 The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.  
 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.  
 The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.  
 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;  
 they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.  
 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

- i. God's **law** is **perfect; reviving the soul**. Law (*torah*) means "teaching." "God, motivated by love, reveals to man basic insight into how to live with each other and how to approach God. Through the law God shows his interest in all aspects of man's life which is to be lived under his direction and care. Law of God stands parallel to word of the Lord to signify that law is the revelation of God's will (e.g., Isa. 1:10). Specifically law refers to any set of regulations; . . . In this light law is often considered to consist of statutes, ordinances, precepts, commandments, and testimonies." (Hartley, TWOT, p. 404). The fundamental idea of "perfect" is completeness. In ethical terms, it is that which is ethically sound, upright (Youngblood, TWOT, p. 974). It is "all-sided so as to cover completely all aspects of life" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182). It revives the soul; it turns the whole person to God (Hartley, TWOT, p. 405); "a beneficial reviving effect that permeates the very life and soul of a converted child of God" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182).
- ii. His **statutes** are **trustworthy, making the simple wise**. Statutes (or "testimony") comes from a root meaning "to bear witness", it is always used of a testimony of God. It specifically designates the two tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments written on them. "The law of God is his testimony because it is his own affirmation relative to his very person and purpose" (Schultz, TWOT, pp. 649-50). The law is a reminder to man of what he is to do and where he has failed to do it (Leupold, Psalms, p. 181). It is a trustworthy (or sure) "foundation on which a man can unhesitatingly build" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182). At the heart of this term is the idea of certainty, including constancy. The net, when applied to God, is total dependability. It is the term from which "Amen" comes (Scott, TWOT, p. 52). It makes the simple wise: "imparting true heavenly wisdom to all who will keep their soul open to its effects" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182) because it teaches us about our Creator.
- iii. His **precepts** are **right, giving joy to the heart**. "Precepts" is used only in the Psalms, this "is a general term for the responsibilities God places on his people" (Hamilton, TWOT, p. 732). The root idea of "right" is to be level or straight. When used ethically, it refers to uprightness or blamelessness (Wiseman, TWOT, p. 417). "It maps out a straight course for any man that would be guided by it" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182). "Giving joy to the heart" implies deep and satisfying joys (Ibid.).
- iv. His **commands** are **radiant, giving light to the eyes**. Commands refer to the particular conditions of God's covenant with men, used of the Ten Commandments in Exod. 24:12. In addition to being radiant (or pure), they are variously described as true (Ps. 119:151), reliable (Ps. 119:86),

righteous (Ps. 119:172) (Hartley, TWOT, p. 757). Radiant (or "pure") refers to "a product that has been thoroughly purified and is thus unadulterated; there are no unwholesome elements in it" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182). Giving light to the eyes indicates that "it imparts a freshness and joy to the very looks of the eye" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182).

- v. The **fear** of the LORD is **pure, enduring forever**. Fear: not specifically referring to God's word, but the effect it should have on us. In the OT the meaning ranges from emotional fear to reverence or awe to formal religious worship (Bowling, TWOT, pp. 399-401). In Deut. 10:12-17 it is linked to what follows (walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him, and keep His commands) and conveys the idea of living properly before God. We fear God in that, as He is awesome and completely beyond us, we stand in a state of fright for what He can do and in a state of awe for who He is. It is this fear that is the beginning of true wisdom (Prov. 1:7). Godly fear is more than just an attitude, however; it involves a response of obedience and right living (Wanke, "*Phobeo*," TDNT Abridged, p. 1274). Pure (or "clean") literally means clean or pure, metaphorically it refers to ethical blamelessness (Yamauchi, TWOT, p. 343-44). Because it endures forever, it will never lose its value. Proverbs has much to say about fearing God:

#### Fear in Proverbs

1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.  
 1:29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD. . . .  
 2:5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.  
 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.  
 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.  
 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.  
 10:27 The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.  
 14:2 He whose walk is upright fears the LORD, but he whose ways are devious despises him.  
 14:16 A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.  
 14:26 He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. 27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.  
 15:16 Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.  
 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.  
 16:6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.  
 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.  
 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.  
 23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.  
 24:21 Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious. . . .  
 28:14 Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.  
 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

- vi. The **ordinances** of the LORD are **sure**, and **righteous altogether**. The core concept of ordinances is justice, though at least thirteen related but distinct aspects of this idea are found in the OT. The idea here is simply an ordinance of law (see Culver, TWOT, p. 949). "Sure" is the only noun in

the series; it implies utter dependability (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182; see also Scott, TWOT, p. 52). They are altogether righteous ("righteous every one"; Kidner, Psalms, p. 100): "it is the essence of true normalcy" (Leupold, Psalms, p. 182).

They are more desirable than wealth (much fine gold) or the sweetest food (honey dripping from the comb). This is because they show us **how** to live (which neither money nor food can do), and there is great reward in keeping them.

- b. We are to **learn** through **study**. Study is not an end in itself, as Paul noted to Timothy: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We do not handle the word of God accurately through some mystical process--it takes disciplined study to know and understand and thoughtful reflection to apply.
- c. We are to **memorize**: As noted in the discussion on Jesus' temptation, He had memorized God's Word and was able to apply it correctly when confronted by Satan. He did not carry around a "pocket Bible"--He had the Word hidden in His heart, available for instant use.
- d. We are to **meditate** on God's word. The following collection of passages shows the importance and benefits of meditating:

#### Passages on Meditating in the NIV

Gen. 24:63	He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.
Josh. 1:8	Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.
Psalms 1:2	But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.
Ps. 19:14	May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.
Ps. 39:3	My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue.
Ps. 48:9	Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.
Ps. 77:12	I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.
Ps. 104:34	May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.
Ps. 119:15	I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
Ps. 119:23	Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees.
Ps. 119:27	Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders.
Ps. 119:48	I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees.
Ps. 119:78	May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause; but I will meditate on your precepts.
Ps. 119:97	Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.
Ps. 119:99	I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.
Ps. 119:148	My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.
Ps. 143:5	I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.
Ps. 145:5	They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

"Meditation is the deliberate, disciplined practice of focusing our attention on a truth or an aspect of reality--ideally, on the truth of the loving presence of Christ in and with us. Meditation consists of dwelling on reality, and God in me *is* reality. . . . Meditation means reflecting on truth, letting it sink in. Meditation involves silent musing . . . taking time daily to sit and ponder what is real" (White, Changing on the Inside, pp. 137-8).

2. **Knowledge of basic truths** that are the foundations for the spiritual disciplines. We will not expand on these here since we dealt with this whole area in Section One. The main areas of truth include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Knowledge of God, including His sovereignty, glory, character, and priorities.
  - b. Knowledge of people, including:
    - i. Our nature as people made in God's image.
    - ii. Our identity as Christians.
    - iii. Our authority as Christ's followers.
    - iv. Our responsibilities in spiritual conflict, including:
      - (1) The need to submit to God before we try to resist Satan.
      - (2) The weapons of spiritual conflict (e.g., putting on the armor of God).
      - (3) The theological framework of spiritual conflict.
  - c. Knowledge of spirit beings, including:
    - i. Satan's character, schemes, tactics, and agents.
    - ii. The character and ministry of God's holy angels.
3. Know how to handle the Word of God correctly.
4. Allow the Word of God to permeate our thoughts so as to renew our minds.

### The *Choosing* Mind

Overview: The <i>Choosing</i> Mind (the Will)	
Basic Function	Choose (as opposed to want or desire)
Satan would have us . . .	Make choices based on sinful habit rather than reflection. Deny or ignore our ability to choose. Choose some form of a distortion of the truth.
The Framework of Spiritual Conflict	Choose to glorify God through commitment to His truth
Spiritual Disciplines to Cultivate	Choose right "programming" based on the truth and exercise our choosing ability in the areas of:  Loving God (repenting before Him, believing in Him, submitting to Him in obedience, enjoying Him, pursuing Him, communing with Him through prayer and worship, fearing Him and trusting and thanking Him in all of life's circumstances)  Loving others as we love ourselves (being filled by the Spirit, stripping of the old self and putting on the new, walking in the light, fellowshiping, taming our tongues)  Forgiving and reconciling with those who have hurt us  Resisting Satan (standing humble yet firm, denying ourselves, taking every thought captive to Christ, putting on our spiritual armor, refusing to let fear dominate us, choosing truth rather than deception, and proclaiming truth)

Foundational to spiritual conflict is understanding that we face choices and that, being made in God's image and empowered by the Spirit, we are able to make correct choices. This is a critical area--it is essentially the application of the basic truths that we learn through the study of God's word. It is important here to distinguish desiring from desiring (wanting) and choosing (commitment):

Desire (or want)	Choose (or commit)
I want to ... (I want to lose weight.)	I choose to ... (I choose to eat french fries!)

God has set us free to choose what is right; but He leaves the actual choices up to us.

Satan, on the other hand, would have us make choices based on sinful habit rather than reflection or deny or ignore our ability to choose or choose some form of a distortion of the truth rather than God's truth.

God **has** empowered us to make the right choices, and He desires that we use that power for righteous choosing! God does not dress us in the morning, and He generally does not tell us what we must wear when we get dressed in the morning--He wants us to choose and do *because we are made in His image*. The choice we must make is that of the person we will glorify. We must exercise our choice of who we will glorify by **glorifying God**.

We glorify God by consciously  
acknowledging His sovereignty with our  
lips, in our hearts, and through our feet.

Without being overly mechanical, to do this we must choose the right "programming" (through learning God's Word and its correct application).

1. We choose to love God by:
  - a. Believing in God. "Believing in" (*pisteueo eis*; John 1:12) is more than believing in what He said; it involves assenting to the truth of it in your own life. However, we must be careful not to try to read too much into the word. The basic meaning of the Greek is similar to the English word "believe," and it can also be translated as obey, trust, or hope (Bultmann, TDNT Abridged, p. 853). Harris relates: "In NT usage 'believing' connotes the confident trust that an individual places in a divine person, not merely the simple credence he gives to verifiable facts. It involves not only recognition and acceptance of the truth, but also adherence and allegiance to the Truth" (Harris, NIDNTT, 3:1213).
  - b. Repenting before God. What does repenting involve?

Repenting involves  
The pain of knowing the beast in my  
basement  
and  
the wonder of knowing that  
I am still loved and accepted.

We expand on repentance and confession in later in the notes.

- c. Submitting to God in obedience: "Submit" was a military term used of soldiers

under their officers. They were required to submit, and Paul gives us the same requirement for our own good. It involves the surrendering of our will under the will of others (Phil. 2:3-4).

Selected Passages on Submit in the Bible

Heb. 5:7: During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

Jas. 4:7: Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Pet. 3:22: Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-- with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

- d. Enjoying God: John Piper argues that the chief end of man is to glorify God **by** enjoying Him forever. (Delighting in God; see also Let the Nations Be Glad!). In the Psalms we find a multitude of fountains of praise and enjoyment of God. Here is a theme worth working on in our daily lives! For a listing of ideas and passages, see the discussion in Section One).
- e. Pursuing the Holy One (see the discussion in Section One).
- f. Communing with God:
  - i. Through worshiping the Glorious King of Kings (see the discussion in Section One).
  - ii. Through prayer: We are privileged to commune with the Creator of the universe!
    - (1) This is an area that needs significant commitment and exploration. For a start, you may consider using a book like Andrew Murray's With Christ in the School of Prayer in your devotional life to cultivate an attitude or prayer.
    - (2) Also worthy of your time is the study of the prayer requests seen the early church. These requests may be used as models for your own prayer (adapted from Piper, Let the Nations Be Glad, pp. 57-61):

God is asked to:

- \* Save unbelievers (Rom. 10:1).
- \* Give them boldness to proclaim the Gospel (Acts 4:29; Eph. 6:18-19).
- \* Perform signs and wonders (Acts 4:30), including healing of the sick believers (Jas. 5:14-15) and nonbelievers (Acts 28:8).
- \* Deliver them from oppression (Acts 12:5).
- \* Guard those sent out to do His work (Acts 14:23).
- \* Give them discerning minds (Phil 1:9-10).
- \* Enable them to know Him better (Col. 1:10; Eph. 1:17).
- \* Make themselves worthy of God's call (2 Thes. 1:11).
- \* Strengthen them with His power (Col. 1:11; Eph. 3:16).

(3) Myths that block prayer (adapted from Jim Wilhoit):

(a) Prayer is only for those who feel close to God.

Response: Prayer is the means by which we draw close to God.

(b) I feel that God is not responding to my prayers.

Response: God is the One who would rather die than live without you. Though the circumstances which make us feel forsaken are unique, the feeling of being forsaken is not universal (even Christ had to face this).

(c) Prayer is a luxury that I cannot afford.

Response: Prayer is the stuff out of which heroes are made--it is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

(d) Everything is predetermined--why pray?

Response: Prayer is not just asking for answers; God has asked us to commune with Him through prayer. Further, God has promised to respond to the prayers of His people.

(e) Prayer is mostly talking.

Response: Prayer is talking and listening (through God's word, through music and quiet meditation).

(f) "Real" prayer is long and difficult.

Response: Real prayer varies from isolated times to quick "bullets." All communication with God is prayer, whatever its length or difficulty.

- (g) I get too many distractions to pray effectively.

Response: The distractions we face are opportunities for prayer about the distractions themselves. See the excellent discussion in Anderson, Walking Through the Darkness, pp. 189-90.

- g. Fearing the Awesome One (see discussion in Section One).
- h. Trusting and thanking Him in all of life's circumstances.
- i. A critical question here is the matter of focus: are we focused on the world around us as the means by which our needs are provided (horizontally) or are we focused on God (vertically)?
- ii. In the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" is a prayer for our needs, not our greeds! The context of the people was that of casual laborers who were paid at the end of one day's work--the essence is "provide for our needs today." This is a reminder that even we who have 'steady' jobs need to depend on God daily even for our ability to earn our food.
- iii. Concerning thanks, two ideas from Scripture may be noted:
- (1) We are to replace evil actions with thanks (Ephesians 5:4).
- (2) We are to give thanks for everything (Ephesians 5:18-21; Col. 3:15-17; 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16-18). At one church this is called "Thank-You Therapy"--a wonderful attitude to take towards the discipline of giving thanks to God in all of the circumstances of life.

2. Loving others as we love ourselves by:

- a. Being filled by the Holy Spirit: Eph. 5:18-21 says, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."
- i. This is a continuous filling. Note the parallel in Colossians 3:16--"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly". In both verses the verbs are passive; the Spirit is the initiator, we are the recipients.
- ii. The results of that filling are essentially praise expressed in different forms: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; singing and

making melody in our hearts to the Lord; and always thanking God for all things.

- iii. Is this a "special" filling? Some see the context as indicating a special emotional filling of the Spirit. Favoring that idea is the result of the filling, a worshipful praise to God. Note the similar verse in Colossians 3:16, where instead of being filled we are told to "let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you", which will yield parallel results of praise. Both contexts carry the same idea: let Christ control and empower you (Col. 3:15: "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"), which would not need to carry the sense of an emotional experience, but a moment-by-moment walk.
- b. Stripping off the old self and putting on the new by constantly being made new in the attitude of your minds (Ephesians 4:22-5:2):

	STRIP OFF THE OLD SELF	JOYFULLY PUT ON THE NEW SELF	Why?
22-24	<i>Corrupted (rotting or decaying) by deceitful desires</i>	<i>Like God in true righteousness and holiness</i>	
25	Falsehood (not just lying, but a false life)	Speaking (and living) truthfully	To maintain our social fabric
26-27	Festering anger (bitterness)	"Dealt with" anger	To avoid giving Satan a bridgehead
28	Stealing (in context by abusing hospitality through "mooching")	Work	To have something to share with those in need
29	Unwholesome (foul, putrid, slanderous) talk	Helpful, building-up talk	To benefit those who hear
30	Grieving the Holy Spirit		Because He sealed you
31	General theme of anger, seen in bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice	Kindness, compassion, and forgiving others	As Christ in God forgave you
5:1		Imitate God	As His children
5:2		Live a life of love	As Christ did

In one sense, the stripping off is like the poorly dressed person coming to a formal occasion and being offered a brand new set of appropriate clothes. How long will it take him to strip the old ones off and put on the new? In another sense, however, it may be thought of as the patient in a burn unit who has to undergo the agony of having the dressings replaced. How strongly we hold on to our old clothes, and how enmeshed we are in them, and how difficult it can be to remove them! Nevertheless, this is what God calls us to do, promising to replace our old clothes or dressings with brand new ones appropriate for His children. This is not all God's work, and not all ours. Together we participate in the struggle to renew our minds (see Barth, Ephesians, pp. 541-2).

- c. Walking in the light (1 John 1:6-7: If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.). This involves being lovingly real with others by expressing our own problems as well as dealing with the problems of others. We are not to use the truth to hurt others, but to encourage them.
  - d. Fellowshiping with other Christians. God created us as members of a community (Gen. 2:18-25), which is the body of Christ, an organism in which everyone has a place and giftings appropriate to the work God has prepared for them, all of which work together to build us up to the full measure of Christ (Eph. 4:7-16).
  - e. Taming our tongues (James 3:2-12). In addressing why we should be careful before aspiring to be teachers, James focuses on one problem in particular--controlling the tongue ("what he says"; vv. 2-5a).
    - i. The tongue is so difficult to control that anyone who is able to master it will be able to master the whole body as well (Moo, James, p. 120). The tongue can boast of great things (just as a bit and a rudder could if they could talk). Boasting is not necessarily negative (Mayor, James, p. 112; Moo, James, p. 123)--it simply shows that the tongue is a powerful instrument.
    - ii. It is a fire, often used to express passions and desires (Osborne, "James," p. 28). Just as a small fire can burn down a large forest, so the tongue can do great damage. "No one can tame the tongue" implies that if it is ever to be tamed, then God must be the One who does it.
    - iii. The tongue is inconsistent: it produces both good and evil (9-12). James uses "we" to identify himself as having the same problem. We all have a "tongue" problem, and must work together with the Spirit and the body of Christ to discipline our tongue so that we speak what glorifies God and builds up others.
3. Forgiving those who have hurt us. We are not ready to receive forgiveness for our sins unless we have forgiven others (Matt. 6:15). We will have great difficulty forgiving others if we do not understand how great our own forgiveness is (Matt. 18:21-35). If there is any single problem holding more people in spiritual bondage than any other, unforgiveness towards those who have hurt them is that problem. What does forgiving others involve?
- a. As a result of my own struggles in this area, I have discovered that much of what I had been taught and had believed was simply not true. There are many myths of forgiveness found in our churches:

Myth 1: I cannot forgive because . . .	Response: God forgives us through Christ; we forgive others in response to His work.
Myth 2: If I can understand or explain why they hurt me, then I do not need to forgive.	Response: Understanding is not the same as forgiving, neither is explaining or excusing!
Myth 3: If I just wait long enough, time will heal the pain and I will not need to forgive.	Response: Time does not heal the wounds--that is why they still hurt!
Myth 4: In forgiving, I become nothing more than a doormat and let them off the hook	Response: Personal forgiveness is not the same as judicial pardon.
Myth 5: I do not need to forgive someone until they ask me.	Response: I am glad Jesus did not wait!!
Myth 6: If I still remember, then I have not really forgiven.	Response: True forgiveness involves living with the consequences of the action(s) of another whether we remember them or not.
Myth 7: I cannot forgive someone if they do not want it.	Response: Forgiveness is between you and God--the other person can be forgiven whether or not they want it.
Myth 8: To forgive someone, I must tell them all the ways they have hurt me.	Response: This is a nice way of getting revenge!

b. Overview of the concepts:

- i. As used in the Bible, there is a range of ways the term "forgiveness" may be understood. This range is depicted in Diagram 3:

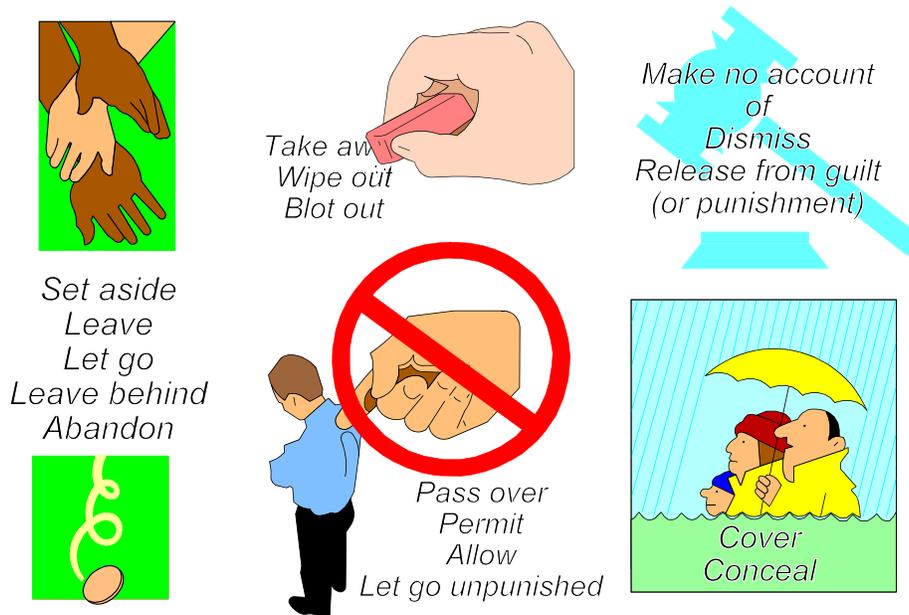


Diagram 3: The Semantic Range of Forgiveness

Forgiving Does <b>Not</b> Involve . . .	Forgiving Does Involve . . .
Being content with asking God to help.	Recognizing that God does help, but I must make the choice; it is crisis of <b>my</b> will.
Forgetting what happened <i>or</i> Denying the truth of my hurt <i>or</i> Letting time heal everything.	Honestly admitting my pain.
Justifying <i>or</i> Excusing <i>or</i> Tolerating what happened.	Being strong enough to hold the offender accountable, recognizing that debt comes with pain.
Waiting until the offender apologizes <i>or</i> taking revenge before you forgive.	Agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin by freely choosing to release the debt and accept the pain that comes with its release.

- c. In cases of significant emotional pain, the total forgiving process may require professional counseling. There are several inappropriate ways we deal with pain in Western culture, all of which are socially allowed but in reality serve to distance us from the one who has hurt us (Augsburger, Conflict Mediation across Cultures, p. 271):
  - i. Denial ("It was nothing, forget it.")
  - ii. Reversal ("I'm not angry at his meanness, just concerned.")
  - iii. Superiority ("Nothing that she could say would affect me.")
  - iv. Isolation ("Feelings? What feelings? I couldn't care less.")
  
- d. Why is forgiveness so critical?
  - i. Forgiveness is at the core of Christ's work on the cross--it is an unnatural act for fallen people.
    - (1) We have been fully forgiven, and one reason is so that we may in turn forgive others.
    - (2) It is part of what He means when He tells us to take up our cross daily.
  
  - ii. Forgiveness short-circuits several areas of attack:
    - (1) When I forgive **myself**, I can recognize my identity as a child of God and I do not have to wallow in self-pity (all too often disguised as self-hatred).
    - (2) When I forgive **others**, they no longer have emotional holds on me--holds that disrupt the process of my maturing as a Christ-follower. It

leaves revenge in the hands of the One person who will handle it justly, and frees us to focus on the true issues of maturing in Christ.

- (3) When I "forgive" **God** by refusing to place the blame for the evil circumstances of my life on him, then I am able to submit myself joyfully and humbly under His sovereignty. (The question is not whether or not I will submit--it is whether I will do so voluntarily!)

iii. Forgiveness affects all three theaters of spiritual conflict:

- (1) Our mind: We are freed from mental/emotional bondage to those who have hurt us.
- (2) Our holiness: We are not carrying around the guilt that comes from refusing to forgive, and it frees us to live righteously in relation to the offender(s). We become 'slippery' in regard to satanic tactics.
- (3) Our service: We do not have personal issues dragging us down, and we are free to look beyond ourselves so as to serve more effectively in the lives of others.

iv. Forgiveness is part of the total reconciliation process (Diagram 4). If we are to live in community with each other, forgiveness is a necessity.

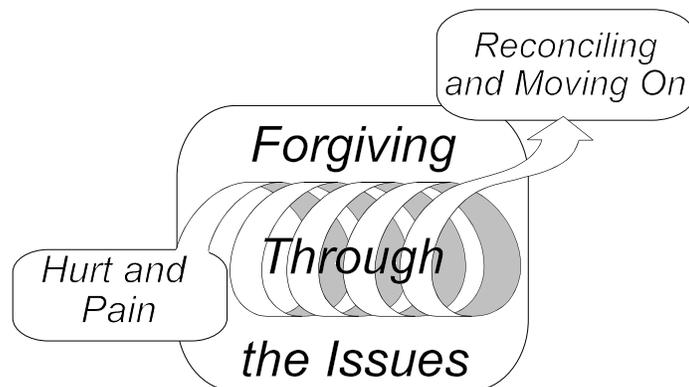


Diagram 4: Forgiving Through Issues

- e. Do I need to forgive someone? Here are several questions we need to ask if we are unsure as to whether there is someone we need to forgive:
- i. Is the pain still there? Does it in any way continue to shape or even define my life?
  - ii. Can you wish them well--and even rejoice when good things happen to them?

- iii. Am I looking for ways to get even and repay the pain they have caused me? Bear in mind that revenge can be active (striking out) or passive (withdrawing, ignoring).
  
- f. How can I forgive (outline from Stoop and Masteller Forgiving Our Parents, Forgiving Ourselves, Appendix A; Diagram 5)? You may choose to do this with a friend as a witness, or do it by yourself.
  - i. *Recognize the injury.* Whom do you need to forgive? How have they hurt or injured you? Describe what happened.
  
  - ii. *Identify the emotions involved.* List some of the feelings you have about what happened. Examples of things consider:
    - (1) "I am *afraid* to look at this because. . . ."
    - (2) "I *feel guilty* about. . . ."
    - (3) "I *feel ashamed and humiliated* by. . . ."
    - (4) "I am *angry* that. . . ."

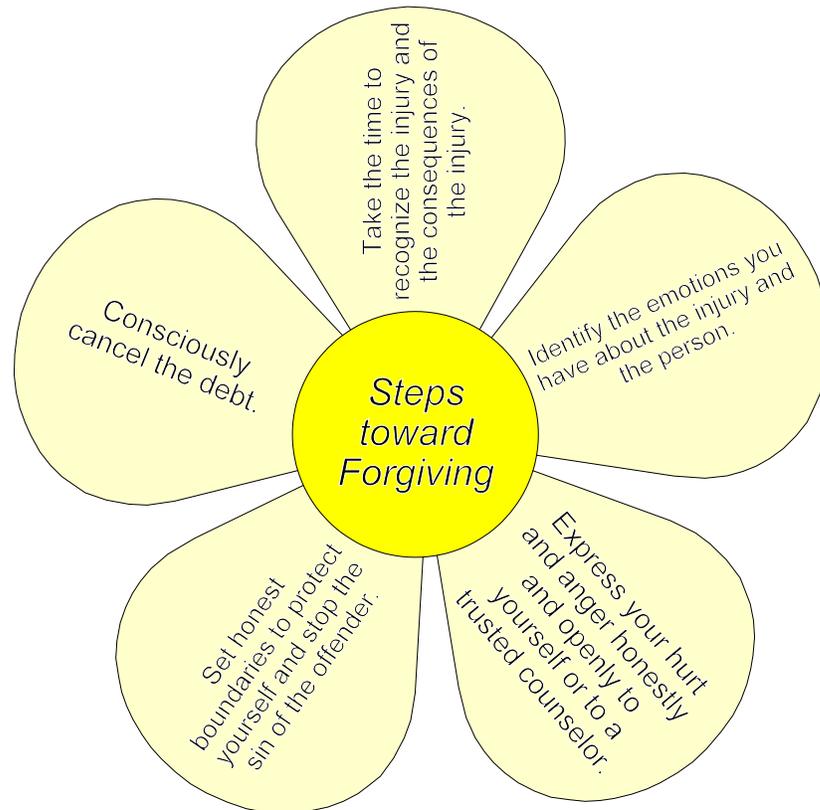


Diagram 5: Steps Towards Forgiving

- iii. *Express your hurt and anger.* "If I could say what I wanted to this person (or these people), I would tell him (her, them). . . ."
  - iv. *Set boundaries to protect yourself.* List what you can do to protect yourself, both now and in the future. This should be done with someone you trust who will help you be realistic.
  - v. *Cancel the debt.* When you have released the other person from your own expectations, you are ready to forgive--to cancel the debt. Write down something you can do to symbolize your willingness to forgive.
    - (1) You will need a time for private reflection. Do not be afraid to get away to ensure that you will not be interrupted.
    - (2) Pray, asking God to reveal to you anyone you need to forgive.
    - (3) Make a list of the names He brings to mind
    - (4) Walk through the list, announcing your pain, hurt, anger, even hatred.
    - (5) Choose to release them, verbally announcing your release. "I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for the time they \_\_\_\_\_ and accept the pain that comes with releasing them from their debt to me." I strongly encourage a verbal renunciation because of verbal pronouncements involve a more conscious and deliberate commitment of your will.
  - vi. *Consider the possibility of reconciliation.* Significant questions you must ask (have a trusted friend help you think them through):
    - (1) Why do you want reconciliation?
    - (2) If you approach the other person(s), what do you think will be their response?
    - (3) Can you accept the worst possible response?
    - (4) How can you check to see if the other person (or persons) are open to working through their part of the reconciliation process?
4. We are to resist Satan.
- a. Peter (1 Peter 5:5b-10) and James (Jas. 4:6-7) both command us to resist Satan through humbling ourselves towards God and standing firm in our faith.

*All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

- (1) "Clothe" (or "fasten firmly on"; Selwyn, First Peter, p. 234) was usually used of putting on an apron over other clothes (Stibbs, First Peter, p.

169). The reason: God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (from Prov. 3:24).

- (2) Humble yourselves under God's hand so that He may exalt you. Humble yourselves "virtually demands from believers not just passive resignation but active co-operation" (Stibbs, First Peter, p. 170; see also Selwyn, First Peter, p. 235). God's mighty hand--He is in complete control of all that happens.
- (3) Because He is in control, we may trust Him fully in all that He allows us to experience. He is the one who will exalt you (see Luke 14:11), and He will do it in His time, not yours.

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

- (4) "Cast" (lit. "throw upon") suggests an effort on our part. The tense of the verb may suggest a one-time action (Stibbs, First Peter, p. 171). Cast it on Him because He cares for you--God is intensely interested in every person He created.

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

- (5) Be of sober spirit (alert), because Satan is looking for prey to devour. Be alert. The world in which we walk is a mine field, and we must walk alertly lest we step on a mine!
  - (a) Satan prowls about.
    - (i) He is our "adversary" (the term usually refers to an opponent in a lawsuit; Stibbs, First Peter, p. 172).
    - (ii) "Devil" refers to a false accuser or a slanderer. In his activities against us, he will lie and cheat to try to win his case.
    - (iii) He prowls like a roaring lion. Don't get lost in the physical imagery or try to draw too much out of the roaring; the core idea is that Satan is a predator who hunts prey.

- (b) Resist Satan.
  - (i) When Satan roars, we do not run, but stand firm in our faith--we do not give in to fear (compare Jas. 4:7)! *When Satan roars, if we run, who is then controlling our lives?*
  - (ii) We resist, knowing that other believers are having the same experiences (present continuous tense--these experiences are continuing). You are not alone, as Satan would have you believe.
- b. Denying ourselves: *We must take up our cross and follow Christ:* (Matthew 16:24-26). The issue here is not self confronting self as the means of denial, as Wink notes, "Jesus does not ask for more self-denial; . . . It is not a question of denying certain things to oneself, like ice cream during Lent, but of *disowning* the ego's claim to possess this life. The task is not ego-conquest by means of the ego (a persistent delusion of many of the 'new spiritualities' today), but ego-surrender to the redemptive initiatives of God. . . ." (Wink, Engaging the Powers, p. 161).
- c. Choosing to take every thought captive to Christ: Paul notes the basic idea in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5: For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
  - i. Strongholds are mental patterns of thought burned into our minds over a period of time or by a traumatic experience. In effect, they are mental programs by which we operate. They are revealed in unchristlike temperaments and behavior patterns. They are often unrecognized by self, and when recognized, seldom understood as our own choices ("That's just the way I am;" Logan, "How the Enemy Attacks").
  - ii. Taking thoughts captive does not refer to every stray thought that comes my way. That would be parallel to confessing every temptation as sin. When evil thoughts come, we simply refuse to give them "free air time" and ignore them. This parallels our refusal to give room for temptation to entice us to sin. When we find ourselves dwelling on these thoughts, then we should take them captive to the throne of Christ.
  - iii. Choosing to put on our spiritual armor (Diagram 6; Ephesians 6:10-19). See the discussion in Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 55-57). This should not be thought of as a one-time event, but as a habit we cultivate throughout our lives.

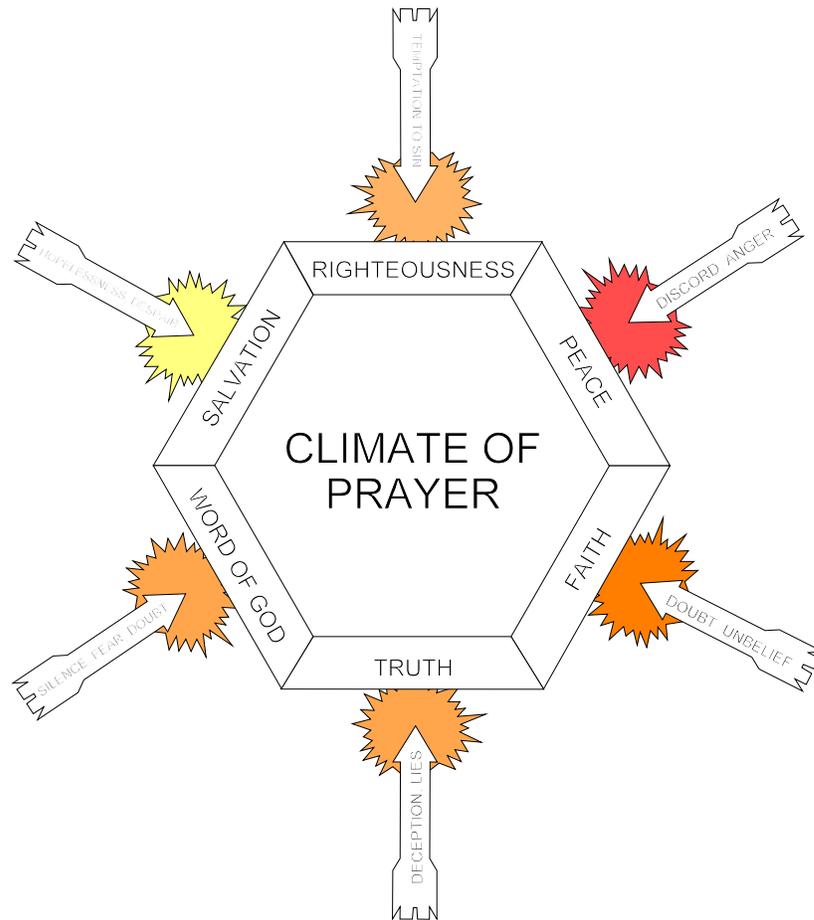


Diagram 6: Our Spiritual Armor

- iv. Refusing to let fear dominate us: the way to deal with fear is to maintain focus.
  - (1) God has given us a Spirit of sonship, not fear (Rom. 8:15; 2 Tim. 1:7).
  - (2) Facing our fears: We must be willing to face the question, "What do I fear the most?" or "What is the worst thing that could happen to me?"
    - (a) If it be death, then Jesus offers to set us free continuing to live in fear of it anymore (Heb. 2:14-15; 3:1).
    - (b) If it deals with our family, we must remember who the Ultimate Protector and Provider is.
    - (c) If we fear "getting clobbered," and we let that fear paralyze us to inaction, then we already are getting clobbered!

- (d) If it deals with reputation or ministry, we must remember God's gracious Hand on our lives, and willingly submit ourselves to His loving sovereignty.
- v. Choosing truth rather than deception: There are several sources of deception:
  - (1) Self (1 Cor. 3:18; 6:9; Gal. 6:3; 6:7; Jas. 1:22-27)
  - (2) The lure of sin (Rom. 7:11; Titus 3:3)
  - (3) Other people (Rom. 16:18; Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:4; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Tim. 3:13; Titus 1:10; 2 John 1:7)
  - (4) Satan (2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Thess. 2:9-10; 1 Tim. 2:14; Rev. 13:14; 20:8, 10)

Don't make the mistake of blaming all deception on Satan--we do not always need his help to be deceived!!

- vi. Verbally proclaiming the truth: Three passages may be noted:
  - (1) 1 Peter 3:18-20a: For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

The word "preaching" (*ekeruzen*) does not necessarily mean to give them a chance to repent. It can simply mean to proclaim (as in Rev. 5:2), and taken here to mean that Christ proclaimed His victory over a group of imprisoned spirits (Stibbs, First Peter, p. 142). The implication, if we take this as Jesus preaching over demonic spirits, is not vindictive "rub it in your face" trash talk--it is the pure and simple proclamation of truth to demons.
  - (2) Ephesians 6:17: Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Though most likely simply a variation in style, this may refer to the verbal declaration of the truth of God as inspired by the Spirit. In light of the warfare metaphor used by Paul in Ephesians 6, it would be naturally seen as a weapon used in spiritual conflict.

- (3) Revelation 12:11: They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

"Testimony" is more than just the story of coming to faith--it is the verbal proclamation of the truth of God as revealed by Jesus and as it works in our lives (see Mounce, Revelation, p. 158 and 158 n. 20; "not primarily their witness about Jesus but the witness that they had received from him"). Such testimony is obviously verbal, and is intimately intertwined in truth.

## The *Feeling* Mind

Basic Function	Experience (emotions)
Satan would have us . . .	Deny or suppress. Express inappropriately. Think either "feelings are all" or "no feelings at all."
The Framework of Spiritual Conflict	Have emotions that correspond to true reality
Spiritual Disciplines to Cultivate	* Handle the full range of emotions properly * Deal with negative emotions (admit them to ourselves; bring them to God, and share them in appropriate ways with appropriate people) * Enjoy positive emotional experiences (allow free joyful expression)

1. "Emotional expression is natural. Our bodies and nervous systems were designed to respond to stimuli with anger, fear, sadness, and so on. But culture and child-rearing practices modify the emotional responses. If emotion is natural, emotional behavior is culturally learned." (White, Changing on the Inside, p. 124). White makes some observations about emotions:
  - a. Emotion is essentially a healthy mechanism, designed to protect us.
  - b. Healthy emotion reflects true reality--often more quickly than our intellects do. There are times when an intellectual grasp of the situation is not enough--we need the emotional response to stir us to action.
  - c. Insanity can mess up the mechanisms governing emotional response. Since none of us has a truly clear picture of reality, all of us are at least a little "insane" and our emotional mechanisms are correspondingly messed up.
  
2. How do the emotions that we must address in the area of spiritual warfare arise? Basically all of our emotions arise as a result of our personal system of judgments or interpretations of the event(s) that we experience (see Solomon, "Emotions and Anthropology). How do we make those judgments?
  - a. Emotions arise out of a complex set of factors (Diagram 7). The model may look deterministic, but the intention is to show that there is a type of emotional hermeneutic which helps us see the foundation of our emotional responses to given situations.

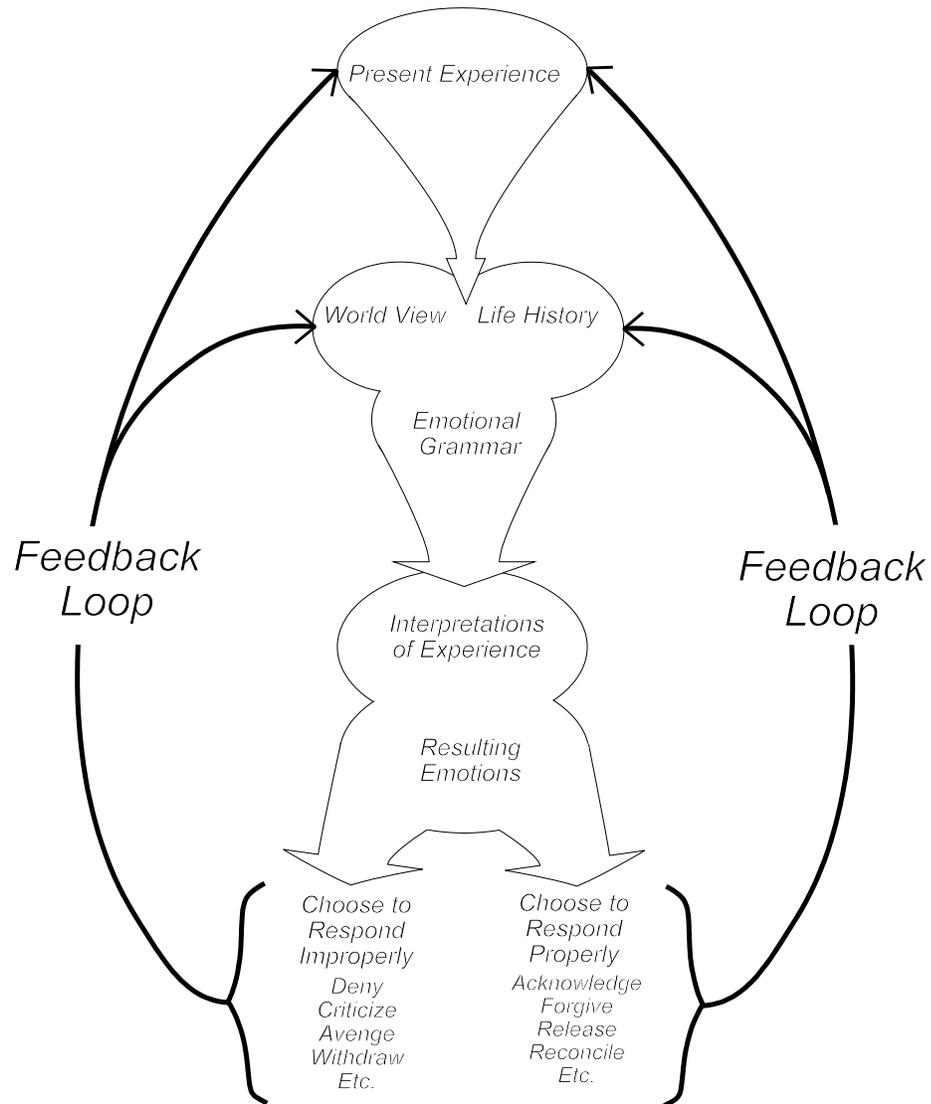


Diagram 7: A Working Model of Emotional Responses

- b. When we experience an event or circumstance which invokes an emotional response, how is that response generated? Three primary sets of factors are involved:
  - i. Our world view and the system of cultural values we hold, which serve as a type of interpretive "map" we rely on to guide us through life.

- ii. The particular life history that we have. No one can change the historical events of their past life, but we can change the extent to which those events continue to control us in the present.
  - iii. Our own "emotional hermeneutic" which results from world view, life history, and genetic parameters given to us by God. Just as hermeneutics in reference to the Bible is the study of interpretation of the text, so our emotional hermeneutic is our own means of interpreting the circumstance.
  - c. We filter the event through these three foundations and develop an interpretation of the event (e.g., "Joe was trying to rip me off").
  - d. Intimately intertwined with our interpretation is our emotional response (e.g., anger at Joe).
  - e. We experience the emotion, and then we face the choice: how do we respond to it? Two primary choices may be noted:
    - i. Improper responses: these include covering over the emotions we feel or denying them, or venting them inappropriately.
    - ii. Proper responses: these involve an honest recognition of our emotions, and an appropriate expression of them. We must also apply Jesus' kingdom ethics to the circumstances, which enables us to take the initiative by not allowing the emotions to force us to act sinfully. When cursed, we bless. When offended, we forgive.
  - f. In a type of feedback loop, our response is incorporated into our life history and emotional grammar, and becomes a part of our past. When we choose bad responses to emotions, we strengthen inappropriate emotional grammar.
3. There are two key issues in relationship to handling emotions:
- a. Choosing to respond properly to the emotion. Anderson notes, "Nowhere does God condemn us for our natural emotional reactions to life, but he does tell us to manage our life. We are to put away anger, malice, hatred, etc. We are to cast our anxiety upon him, and we are to acknowledge our anger and depression. Essentially, we are to be emotionally honest with ourselves and others, and not feel guilty for being a real person." (Anderson, Resolving Personal Conflicts, p. 22). We:
    - i. Acknowledge or admit what we are feeling in appropriate ways to appropriate others (especially God!).
    - ii. Forgive and/or release when necessary.

- iii. Reconcile (if necessary).
- b. Changing our own "emotional hermeneutic" through the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2), accomplished by knowing the truth, following the right mental programming, and consistently choosing to walk in the truth (or light).

## Personal Spiritual Conflict: The Battle for Holiness

### Overview

4. Myths of holiness
5. Facing the "beast in the basement"
6. Enticements to evil
7. Maintaining holiness: Confession and repentance

*Plants grow where conditions are favorable. The same is true of the evil in us. The more we indulge in evil, the more powerful the evil becomes. Eventually, we may reach the point where evil controls us.*

White, Changing on the Inside, p. 74

### 1. (Selected) Myths of holiness

Myth 1: I could never be holy. . .

Response: You already are!

Myth 2: Being holy means that I will be so heavenly minded that I will not be any earthly good.

Response: Jesus was so heavenly minded that he did the most earthly good! A genuine "heavenly mindedness" will enable us to overcome earthly circumstances and fears.

Myth 3: Being holy involves a complete denial of all of my own personal desires and hopes.

Response: Those hopes and desires are submitted to the Lordship of Christ. He returns a thousand-fold on them by molding them in a way that glorifies Him and then meeting them beyond our wildest expectations.

Myth 4: Since all my sins are forgiven in Christ, holiness is not an important issue for me.

Response: God grants us holiness in Christ, but calls us to a lifestyle what expresses what we are. Why should those who are holy return to unholy living, unless they are deceived that such living is of greater significance (or fun ...) than righteous living.

### 2. We must come to grips with the "beast in the basement" of our own house (White, Changing on the Inside). Two passages in Romans are significant in this regard:

- a. Romans 6:12-14: Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

Paul exhorts us not to let sin reign in our bodies. As people, we have two options (v. 13):

- i. Place the parts of our bodies (i.e. any natural capacity we have; Cranfield, Romans, p. 317) as weapons (or instruments) of sin. Sin is a General that uses our natural capacities as weapons in the battle it fights. Paul exhorts us to stop placing ourselves at sin's disposal in this war.
  - ii. Offer ourselves to God and our "members as weapons in the service of righteousness" (Barrett, Romans, p. 128). The "war" vocabulary is a reminder that this is a genuine battle that we face.
- b. Romans 7:14-25 (the reality of the Christian's struggle)
- i. Paul's central idea is that this passage refers to mature Christians. (For discussion, see the commentaries by Cranfield, Murray, Hodge, and Hendriksen.)
  - ii. In vv. 7-13 Paul addresses whether the law is evil. He concludes that it is not (v. 12), but that sin utilized the law to work its evil in man (v. 8). Indeed, that is why the law was given--to show sin for what it is (vv. 7,13).
  - iii. The believer exists in tension--(s)he is a saint who still wrestles with sin. Hendriksen remarks: "For the present, the Christian is living in an era in which two ages, the old and the new, overlap. There was a time when Paul was exclusively a sinner. There will be a time when he will be exclusively a saint. Right now, as he is dictating this letter, he is a sinner-saint. A "saint", to be sure; but also still a 'sinner'; hence the tension, the inner conflict. It is a struggle which every true believer experiences" (Hendriksen, Romans, p. 232).
3. Enticement to evil
- a. Earlier in the course we noted that Satan is not so much creative as discreative--he takes the good that God has created and perverts it. Diagram 8 illustrates the basic principle of how sin is committed when we take the good that God offers and go beyond His intentions (e.g., love turns to lust or protectionism or control over another):

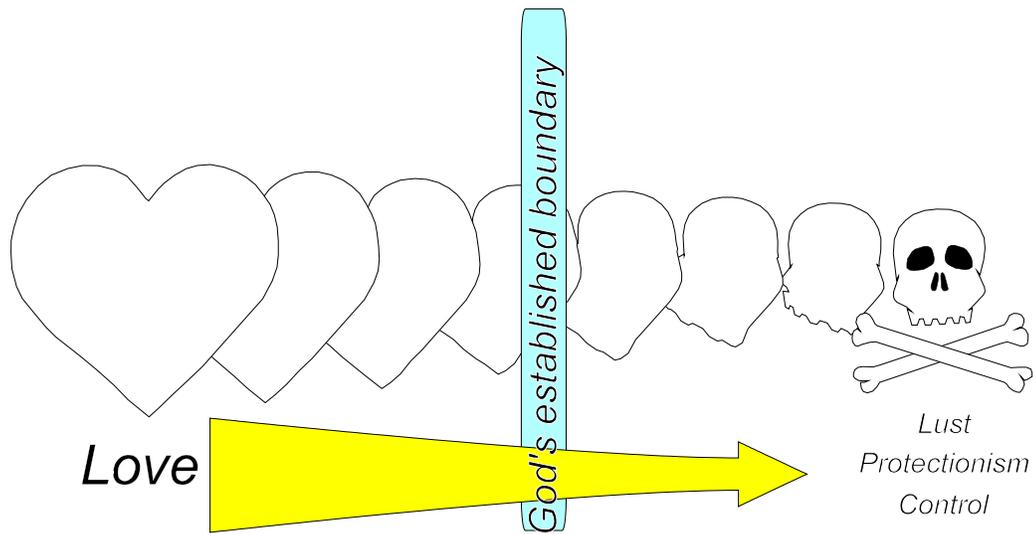


Diagram 8: Taking Good Beyond the Boundary

- b. Sources of enticement to evil include the world (or domination system), the flesh, and the devil (Diagram 9). While Satan may use a "back door" approach (by enticing us through the world or our flesh; Diagram 10) we must recognize that he is not the only source of the temptations we face. Our own former participation in the ways of the world serves as a constant drawing force against which we must fight.

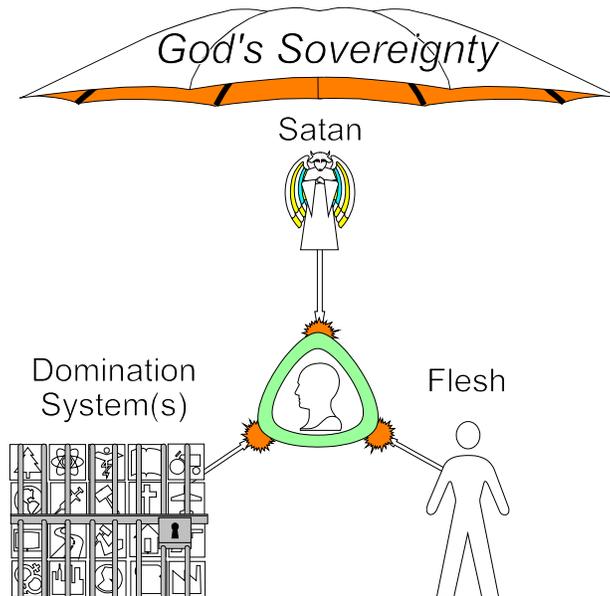


Diagram 9: Sources of Enticement

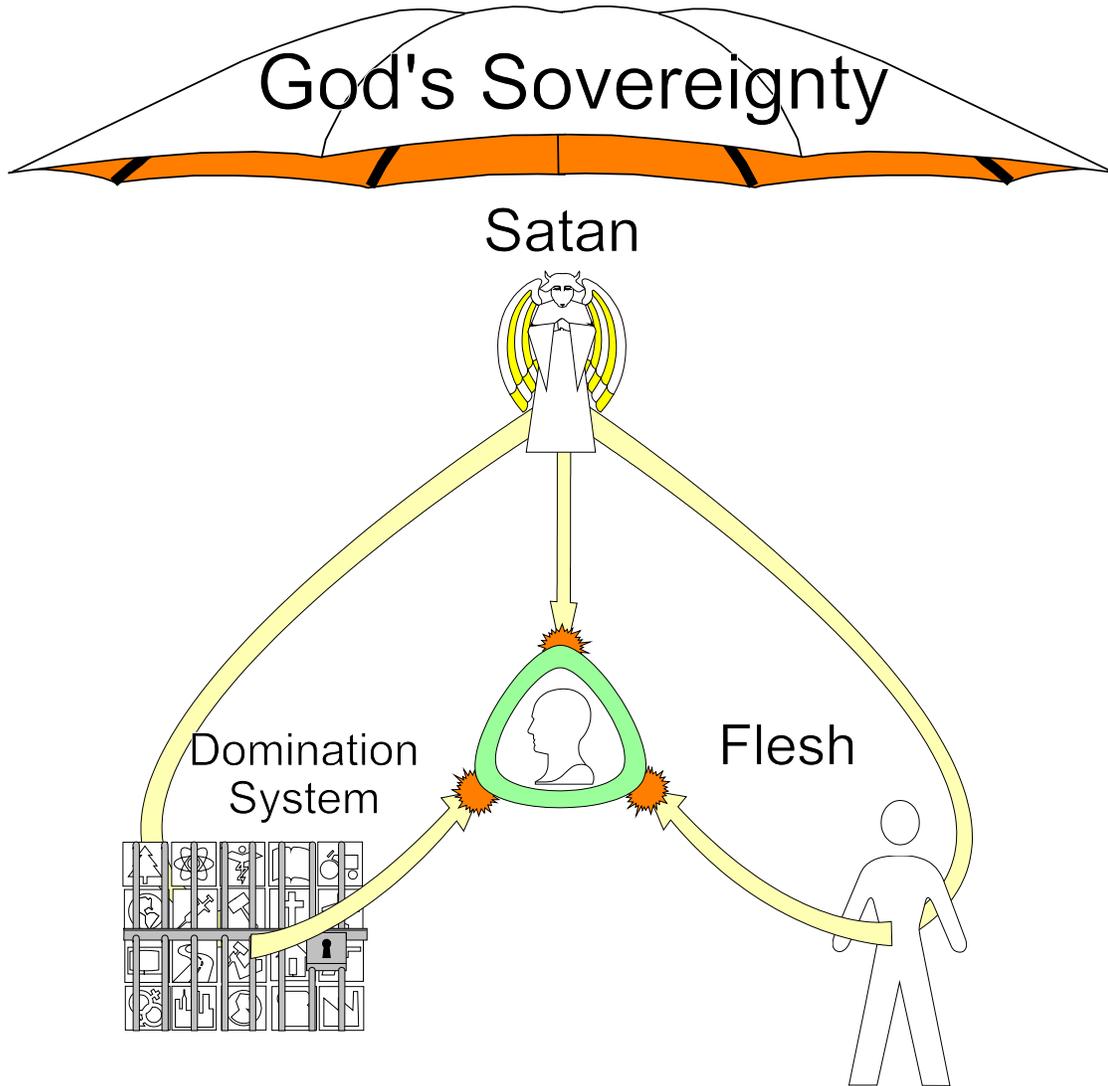


Diagram 10: Satan's Use of Back Doors

c. The three major sources of sin:

i. Pride

There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty.

*C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, pp. 108-9*

(1) **Pride:** the attitude that says we can do it on our own. Ultimately it is a denial of our dependence on God for life itself. Proverbs warns

against pride:

**Pride in Proverbs**

8:13: To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.  
 11:2: When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.  
 13:10: Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.  
 16:18: Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.  
 21:24: The proud and arrogant man-- "Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.  
 29:23: A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

- (2) Pride is woven into the very fabric of our culture. Few of us ever realize its existence, let alone its extent. John White points out, "Curiously, pride is the very quality we try to inculcate into our children for their good. We define it, to be sure, as self-respect. . . . In other words we teach our children as we were taught ourselves--to overcome weaknesses and vices by pride" (Changing on the Inside, p. 77).
  - (3) Pride is at heart competitive--it "gets no pleasure out of something, only out of having more of it than the next man" (Lewis, Mere Christianity, p. 109). Ultimately, to be fulfilled, pride must even look down on God. Thus it is viewed as the core of sin and at the heartbeat of evil.
- ii. **Anger:** (linked to pride; discussed in Allender and Longman; pp. 94-100): the emotional response to dealing with someone who has blocked me in my pursuits. All of us have experienced anger, and anger that is left unresolved over past hurts forms a motivational core that drives the way we live our day to day lives.
  - iii. **Lust:** All of us want to avoid emptiness and find satisfaction. Often we think of earthly things as essential to meeting this need. Lust is when we allow these desires to control us and lead us away from God's provisions (Allender and Longman, Bold Love, pp. 100-107; also White, Changing on the Inside, p. 75). In 1 John 2:16, two types of lust are noted:
    - (1) Lust of the flesh: the appetites of the flesh (physical needs including food, drink, sex, sleep)
    - (2) Lust of the eyes: the things of life that we do not need yet want (greed or coveting things aroused by seeing them--materialism is a basic

idea). This form of lust is aroused by visual stimuli--such as advertisements that entice us pictorially to purchase a product.

Most generally speaking, lust is essentially unbridled appetite or desire. It is not ever really conquered for all time. Rather, it is held in check on a moment-by-moment basis. For example, we do not conquer hunger by stuffing ourselves once--as soon as the food is digested we are ready for (and in need of) more.

#### 4. Maintaining holiness: Confession and repentance

Mercy is persistently meaningful only to the degree I am silenced by the enormity of my refusal to love God and others with my whole heart, soul, strength, and mind.

*Allender and Longman, Bold Love, pp. 80-81*

- a. Confession: We cannot deny our own sin and have fellowship with God (1 John 1:8-9).
- (1) Sin here probably refers to our nature and not just our individual sins. Some see this as denial of guilt, but the claim here is parallel to 1 John 1:6 where it is definitely sin in view.
  - (2) Those who make this claim deceive themselves and the truth is not in them--they have lied even to themselves!
  - (3) Those who confess their sins, however, are assured of God's forgiveness.
    - (a) Confess their sins (note the plural), not just their sin nature but the sins themselves.
    - (b) To "confess" (*homologeō*; lit. "to say the same") is simply to agree with God concerning our sin. The present tense indicates that this is a continuous process. The promised result is a sure cleansing, because God is faithful to do as He promised.
      - (i) He is faithful to His covenant promise to forgive.
      - (ii) He is just--He forgives us on the basis of Christ's death (a judicial act).
    - (c) This does not demand a moment-by-moment introspection based on the idea that every single sin breaks fellowship. The focus of the perfect tense is a continual problem, i.e., giving into

sin. This could be individual sin or it may be a series of sins leading to a continual defeat.

- (d) In light of the promise given here, the sense is to admit our sins to God and to rest in the assurance of His promised forgiveness. I avoid using the term "asking" for forgiveness, because of the implication that our request might be refused, which God has promised not to do. Rather, we are confident that our confession will be heard and we will be cleansed as a result.
- b. Repentance: Repentance is intimately intertwined with confession. It is the act of turning away from sin. Genuine confession cannot be separated from repentance.
- i. John White adapts the 12-step approach of Alcoholics Anonymous to repentance (Changing on the Inside):

#### Steps for "Repenters Anonymous"

- 1 & 2: I tell God I need to see both my own transformed nature as well as my sinful tendencies in all their depths. I also ask Him to reveal to me His greatness and His kindness. I accept His promise to show me all I need to see.
- 3: I offer my body as a living sacrifice to God, and as an act of worship.
- 4: I pray that God will search my heart. I promise God: "As you do, so I will write down those sins and failures to which you draw my attention."
- 5: God helping me, I will admit to myself, to God, and also to a friend, the exact nature of my sins. Give me a friend, I pray, to whom I may be accountable.
- 6: Pray: "Lord, I want to be entirely ready for you to remove every sinful tendency in me. So far as I know, I am ready. But go on testing me, showing me where my motives are phony."
- 7: Pray: "I know you are willing to forgive me, but I ask you to make your forgiveness clear in the deepest parts of my being and not just in my intellect. Show me I am forgiven indeed. Show me the love of Christ as shown on the Cross."
- 8: I make a list of people I have hurt and wronged, beginning with those closest to me. I face before God my responsibility to act.
- 9: Wherever I can, I will make amends, and do so as soon as possible.
- 10: I resolve to come before you at certain special times to let you examine my heart and life.
- 11: I resolve to seek through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God as He knows Himself to be, praying only for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry that out.
- 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of following these steps, I resolve to carry the message of God's love and forgiveness and my need for repentance to others and to practice that message in my own daily living.

- c. We not only repent before God, we must also be willing to repent before the other who had been sinned against. Repenting in relation to others may be seen in the following diagram adapted from the content presented in Allender and Longman (Bold Love, p. 249):

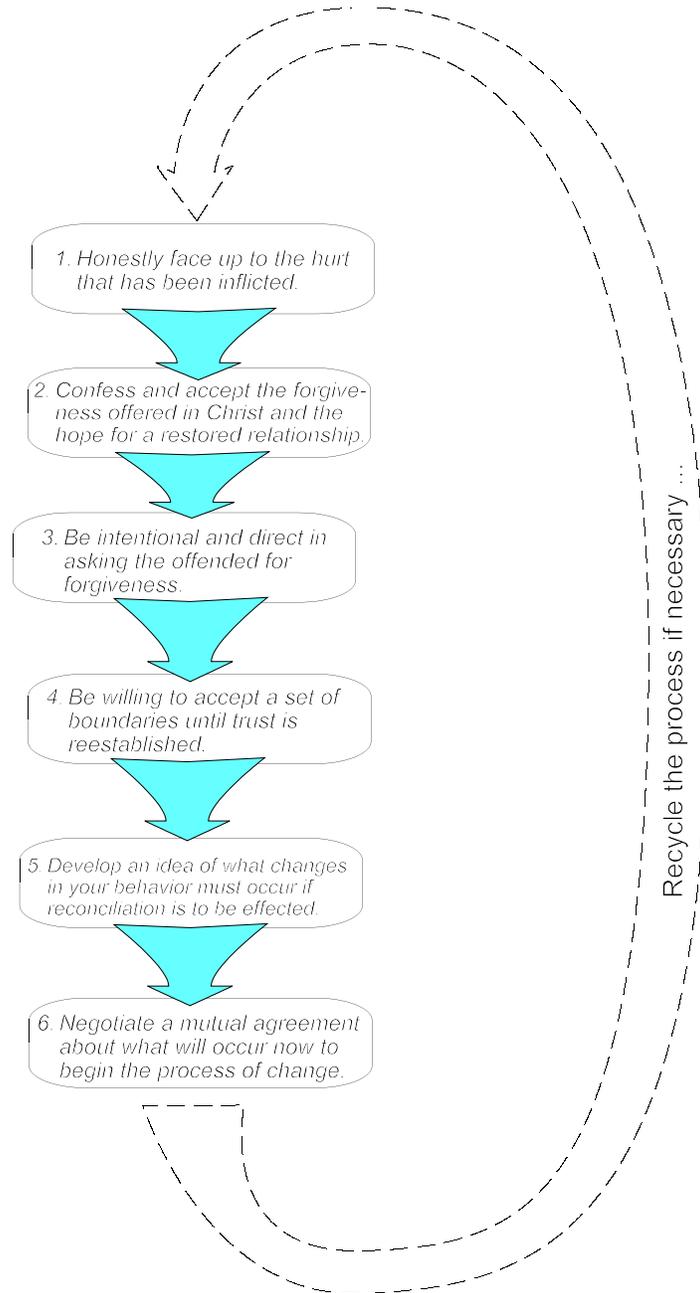


Diagram 11: The Process of Genuine Repentance