



the

FREEDOM

booklet

“If you grow a healthy tree, you’ll pick healthy fruit. If you grow a diseased tree, you’ll pick worm-eaten fruit. The fruit tells you about the tree... A good person produces good deeds and words season after season. An evil person is a blight on the orchard.”

— MATTHEW 12:33-35, THE MESSAGE

YOUR LIFE IS LIKE A TREE. YOU CAN PRODUCE HEALTHY FRUIT THAT BENEFITS PEOPLE OR UNHEALTHY FRUIT THAT HURTS PEOPLE.

We are created in the image of God. This identity is intrinsic. Unfortunately, our perception of this identity has been distorted and devalued. Because of this false perception, our heart and mind have been poisoned with negative attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. This poison affects our view of God and others. As a result, we cope by fighting or guarding against being hurt. However, these behaviors become habits that poison others while perpetuating our own pain. Only Jesus can redeem our deep-rooted negative perception of our identity — empowering us to enjoy life and live connected with others.

Our lives are like a tree. The fruit of our lives — our behaviors and actions — are fed by the root system of our attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. These originate early in our developmental years through our experiences and relationships. If these experiences and relationships are healthy, we develop healthy attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings that produce healthy coping behaviors and habits. However, if our experience or relationships do not foster healthy attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, or feelings, we develop destructive coping behaviors and habits. Unfortunately, we have all been involved in some form of unhealthy experience or relationship in our early growing up years.



The Freedom Booklet is a resource that can help you identify and uproot those unhealthy attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. It will encourage you to acknowledge the negative effects, repent of your reactions, and release the offender to the Lord. At the end, you will have the opportunity to replace the negative attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings with God's truth about who you are and about

your situation. This truth will empower you to live free in your future no matter what.

There are three ways you can work through this resource: 1) forgiving someone of an offense; 2) releasing a loss;¹ or 3) repenting of a sin.² As you make your way through this process, I recommend you watch the tutorial videos for each section. These videos can be found at our website under *The Freedom Booklet* resource:

www.CultivateRelationships.com/Resources

One final note, don't just simply answer the questions. God knows your heart and sees your life. He knows what is most important and He sees the deep areas of your mind and heart. Therefore, before writing anything down, it is recommended you pray through each question and listening for what the Holy Spirit may want to say or show you. Then, use a notebook or journal to write out what you see or hear God saying in response to the question.

Writing out (not typing) these responses will help clarify your thoughts and bring finality to the process. Also, some of the questions may refer to a response you previously wrote down. Therefore, writing these answers out will help you reference these responses later in the booklet and bring a thoroughness to the process.

Be honest with yourself and God — fully revealing the specifics of what has been in your heart and mind. Be fully open and ready to receive what God has for you. While some sections in this resource may be easier than others, push through to the end. It will be good.

¹ **Forgiving God or Processing a Loss:** Processing a loss, unless resulting from one's own choices, is an issue of trusting God and releasing the effects of that loss to Him. If you feel a perceived debt in which God owes you something, you can still benefit from this resource. Work through this resource but pay special attention to *Step 9: Receiving & Replacing* (pg. 22). Trusting the Heavenly Father's perfect love, goodness, and character will help you embrace His plan and purpose for your life.

² **Forgiving Yourself:** If you feel the need to forgive yourself, you can still benefit from this resource. Work through this resource paying special attention to *Step 6: Repenting & Confessing* (pg. 16). Trusting that Jesus has paid this price for your sin — acknowledging and receiving His forgiveness — will empower you to live free of guilt and shame.

STEP 1: EXPERIENCES & RELATIONSHIPS

Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.

~ Psalm 26:2, NASB

Then [Jesus] said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come..."

~ Luke 17:1

In a notebook or journal, write out your responses to the **bolded** statements on the following pages.

NOTE: If this is your first time going through this resource, it is recommended you begin with offenses you experienced early in your growing up years. Try to be as specific as possible in the person(s) or situation involved.

OFFENSES

The following are some examples of offenses you may have experienced in your life: *A person's words or actions that made you feel negatively; People or situations where you have been or felt violated or abused; A separation or divorce in either your own life or in the life of a couple close to you; Conflicts in your life involving parents, family, friends, coworker, church leaders, mentors, teachers, coaches, or others; or Significant moments where you did not feel loved or safe.*

(1.1) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind key offenses or hurts that you have experienced in your life. Write down all the ones that come to mind.

LOSSES

The following are some examples of significant losses that you may have experienced in your life: *Loss of a career or job; Loss of health; Loss of a relationship due to conflict, separation, divorce, or death; Loss of a dream for your life or your future involving relationships, marriage, children, or career, etc.*

(1.2) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind key losses you have experienced in your life. Write down all the ones that come to mind.

SINS

The following are some examples of significant or ongoing sins you may have participated in: *Things you've said or done to others that negatively affected them; Things you haven't said or done to others and as a result have negatively affected them; Things you didn't intentionally do to hurt others but it negatively affected them anyway; Things you chose to do that, while not hurting anyone else, you now know is unhealthy and against God's design for you, etc.*

(1.3) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind key sins issues you have struggled releasing in your life. Write down all the ones that come to mind.

Choose ONE of the previous offenses, losses, or sins that you've to work through at this time.

NOTE: If this is your first time going through *The Freedom Booklet*, it is recommended you choose one of the earliest offenses you identified in 1.1 (pg. 4) — especially those relating to your early growing up years in general and your biological parents in particular.

(1.4) Write down the offense, loss, or sin (i.e., the event) you are choosing to resolve at this time:

(1.5) Write down the main person (or people) involved or at fault in this event (if applicable):

STEP 2: ATTITUDES, THOUGHTS, BELIEFS, & FEELINGS

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

~ Psalm 139:23-24, NLT

Early painful experiences and relationships build the foundation of our attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Your willingness to identify these negative attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings is an important step in becoming free from destructive coping behaviors and habits.

(2.1) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recall and clarify what your thoughts have been regarding this event.

(2.2) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recall and clarify what your thoughts have been toward the person (or people) involved (if applicable).

Use the following list of words to help clarify, guide, direct, and articulate your thoughts and feelings regarding this specific experience. Identify the top three or four feelings that most apply to this specific event.

Unloved	Unknown	Abandoned	Disappointed	Hopeless
Unworthy	Controlled	Failure	Inferior	Judged
Worthless	Vulnerable	Unwanted	Rejected	Mocked
Insignificant	Inadequate	Discouraged	Powerless	Resentful
Alone	Unaccepted	Uncared For	Unprotected	Used
Worthless	Unheard	Trapped	Unimportant	Victimized
Devalued	Unsafe	Detached	Anxious	Helpless
Defective	Shut Down	Heavy	Indecisive	Insecure
Insecure	Exhausted	Betrayed	Tired	Distrusting
Disconnected	Weak	Duped	Isolated	Out of Control
Manipulated	Depressed	Deceived	Afraid	Overwhelmed
Frustrated	Ashamed	Exposed	Annoyed	Not Good Enough
Disregarded	Guilty	Stupid	Confused	Not Measuring Up
Disrespected	Humiliated	Invisible	Disoriented	Misunderstood
Belittled	Frustrated	Forgotten	Let Down	Beaten Down
Hopeless	Invalidated	Deflated	Disillusioned	Bitter/Anger ¹
Dirty	Fearful	Paralyzed	Condemned	

Answer the following questions using the three or four attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings you’ve identified above that best fit the way you have felt about the situation or person.

(2.3) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you clarify how this specific event has affected you. Be sure to answer separately for each one you identified.

(For example, you may write down: “*I feel ___ because...*”)

¹ Bitterness and anger are internal and external behavioral reactions. While we may genuinely “feel” bitter or angry, these are reactions to something or someone triggering a negative emotion in us. If you identified bitterness or anger as your feeling, be sure to include details of these as specific responses in *Step 3: Coping Behaviors & Habits*, pg. 10.

(2.4) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how this event negatively affected your life when it first happened.

(2.5) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the negative emotional, physical, or mental consequences caused by this event with which you are currently living.

(2.6) Ask the Holy Spirit how this event will or might negatively affect your future.

(2.7) Ask the Holy Spirit how this event has or might negatively affect those you love.

STEP 3: COPING BEHAVIORS & HABITS

*Good people bring good things out of the good they store in their hearts.
But evil people bring evil things out of the evil they stored in their hearts. People
speak the things that are in their hearts.*

~ Luke 6:45, NLT

Destructive coping behaviors and habits are developed when we believe a lie about ourselves, others, and God. Therefore, we negatively react to the people who have caused us pain. This begins a lifestyle of fighting or guarding against being hurt again — which leads to us hurting those around us.

(3.1) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind and clarify the things you've said:

a. To or about the person (if applicable)

b. About the event

(3.2) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind and clarify what you've done or failed to do:

a. To the person because of what they did
(if applicable)

b. As a result of the event

(3.3) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the thoughts you've had:

a. Toward the person (if applicable)

b. About the event

(3.4) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the negative beliefs you started to have as a result of this event, specifically toward:

a. The offender (if applicable)

b. The event

(3.5) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the negative beliefs you started to have as a result of this event, specifically toward:

a. Yourself

b. God

c. Similar Situations

d. Similar People (as the offender, if applicable)

STEP 4: GOD-GIVEN NEEDS & DESIRES

People, trust God all the time.

Tell him all your problems, because God is our protection.

~ Psalm 62:8, NCV

I cry out to the LORD; I pray to the LORD for mercy.

I pour out my problems to him; I tell him my troubles.

~ Psalm 142:1-2, NCV

We are born with God-given needs and desires. These include being loved, cared for, and safe. In the following responses you will identify and express your unmet God-given needs or desires along with your current ones.

(4.1) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you clarify how you feel about this person and/or event.

(4.2) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you clarify what:

a. You are disappointed or upset about

b. You wish would have happened (or not happened)

(4.3) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you clarify your current needs and desires (what you would like to happen) as you begin to move forward from this event.

STEP 5: GIVE THANKS

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;

I will recount all your wonderful deeds.

~ Psalm 9:1, ESV

I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving,

and will call upon the name of the LORD.

~ Psalm 116:17, NKJV

Always give thanks to God the Father for everything,

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

~ Ephesians 5:20, NCV

Giving thanks to the Heavenly Father aligns our perspective with His. It helps us begin to trust Him amidst painful experiences — releasing control of what we think should happen. However, this can be very difficult and often feels like a sacrifice. Ask Him to help you find something to be thankful for regarding the event then tell Him in writing. Finally, tell Him that you are willing to accept however He wants to use this event in your life. He is good and favors you — truly desiring to give you purpose and the opportunity to prosper and live joy-filled.

(5.1) Express to the Heavenly Father your prayer of thanksgiving amidst of this event — choosing to focus on and be grateful for His empowerment to live through and beyond this event.

THE SERVANT WHO NEVER FORGAVE.

Then Peter came to [Jesus] and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”

“No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!

“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ *Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.*

“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. *He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.*

“His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! *I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?*’ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt [*of which he owed nothing because the King already forgave his debt — his imprisonment was self-induced*].

“That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

— MATTHEW 18:21-35 | NLT *Emphasis Added*

STEP 6: REPENTING & CONFESSING

Pain handled in God's way produces a turning from sin to God which leads to salvation, and there is nothing to regret in that! But pain handled in the world's way produces only death. For just look at what handling the pain God's way produced in you! What earnest diligence, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what readiness to put things right! In everything you have proved yourselves blameless in the matter.

~ 2 Corinthians 7:10-11, CJB

But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done.

~ 1 John 1:9, NCV

Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.

~ James 5:16, THE MESSAGE

Repentance is turning away from our own desires and lifestyles back toward God — to live how He designed us to live. It is full acknowledgement, trust, and submission to the Heavenly Father and His design and plan for our life. Repentance can, first, be demonstrated in a simple apology. Finish the following statements of confession and apologies in your journal or notebook.

(6.1) Express to Jesus your confession and statement of apology for your unwillingness to forgive the offending person. (Skip if you are resolving a sin where you are the offending person.)

(6.2) Express to Jesus your apology for what you've said and done toward the person that were wrong, hurtful, or negative. (Refer to 3.1-2, pg. 11)

(6.3) Express to Jesus your apology for the wrong, hurtful, or negative thoughts and attitudes you've believed or decisions you've made toward the offender or about the situation. (Refer to 3.3-4, pg. 12-13)

(6.4) Express to Jesus your apology for the wrong, hurtful, or negative thoughts and attitudes you've believed or decisions you made about yourself, God, or similar situations and people. (Refer to 3.5, pg. 13)

(6.5) Express to Jesus the summation of your previous apologies. Confess and apologies to him for all the thoughts and behaviors from which you've been living. Finally, end your apology by thanking him for his goodness and faithfulness and express that you are choosing to receive His forgiveness.

STEP 7: FORGIVING OFFENSES

Yes, if you forgive others their sins, your Father in heaven will also forgive you for your sins. But if you don't forgive others, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.

~ Matthew 6:14-15, NCV

Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

~ Ephesians 4:31-32, NCV

Answer the following statements by writing out your decision to forgive the person who has sinned against you. Forgive the specific hurts or offenses, releasing your control to God. Choose to forgive the person who has hurt or offended you. Include the specific consequences of how they have negatively affected you in the past. Also, include how they are currently affecting you, and may affect you in the future.

FORGIVING YOURSELF: If you feel like you still need to forgive yourself, revisit *Step 6* (pg. 16), answering the questions (especially 2-5, pg. 17). Then skip to *Step 8* (pg. 20) and entrust your sin along with any negative consequences on others or yourself to God — trusting Jesus has paid the price for your sin, receive and embrace His forgiveness, and ultimately believe God is bigger than your sin.

FORGIVING GOD: If you are processing a loss, remember that God's perfect love and infinite goodness exclude Him from being forgiven. Processing a loss is often an issue of trusting God's love and goodness amidst disappointment or tragedy. If you feel as though God still "owes" you something, look back at *Step 6* (pg. 16) and answer questions 4 and 5 (pg. 17). Then, skip to *Step 8* (pg. 20) and entrust yourself and your circumstances to His love and goodness.

In your notebook or journal, write out and complete the following statements in your own words.

(7.1) Jesus, I choose to forgive _____
[insert person from 1.5, pg. 6] **for the following offense...**

(7.2) Jesus, I choose to forgive _____
[insert person from 1.5, pg. 6] **for the following ways this offense has affected me in the past.** (Refer to 2.3, pg. 8)

(7.3) Jesus, I choose to forgive _____
[insert person from 1.5, pg. 6] **for the following ways this offense has affected me in my current circumstances and relationships.** (Refer to 2.4-5, pg. 10)

(7.4) Jesus, I choose to forgive _____
[insert person from 1.5, pg. 6] **for the following foreseen and unforeseen ways this offense may affect me in my future.**
(Refer to 2.6, pg. 10)

(7.5) Jesus, I choose to forgive _____
[insert person from 1.5, pg. 6] **for the following foreseen and unforeseen ways this offense has affected those I love.**
(Refer to 2.7, pg. 10)

STEP 8: RELEASING & BLESSING

“I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does.”

~ Matthew 5:44-45, THE MESSAGE

Don’t hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you’ve got it in you, get along with everybody. Don’t insist on getting even; that’s not for you to do. “I’ll do the judging,” says God. “I’ll take care of it.” Our scripture tells us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he’s thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness.

Don’t let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

~ Romans 12:17-21, THE MESSAGE

OFFENSES: This is one of the most powerful steps in resolving offenses — letting go of your control and desired outcomes. God is faithful. He is bigger and better at dealing with our pain and past. Give control back to Him so that He can do something good with it — so that His grace can bring real peace to your mind.

LOSS: If you’re grieving a loss, know that God can work horribly traumatic events out for your good. Because of our limited perspective, we do not get to define what that good may mean. He may not have caused this loss, but He will redeem it to bring peace and hope back into your mind and life. We release control and what we think should have happened to God’s perfect love and goodness.

SIN: If you’re resolving a sin issue then you can be confident Jesus already forgave you. You simply need to receive it and live confidently knowing you are loved and the pain and disappointment you’ve caused others can be remedied in him. Entrusting your thoughts, behaviors, and current circumstances to God’s grace and mercy enables you to live free of shame, guilt, and condemnation.

In your notebook or journal, write out and complete the following statements with your own words. **LOSS:** If you're grieving, entrust the event to God. Ask Him to redeem and remedy the pain, loss, and anxiety you're feeling. **SIN:** If you're repenting, entrust yourself and the consequences to God. Ask Him to specifically remedy the negative circumstances you've caused and/or the people you've hurt.

(8.1) Jesus, I choose to release _____
[insert the person (if offense/sin) from 1.5, pg. 6 or event (if loss) from 1.4, pg. 6] **to You good Father, in the following specific ways:** (Refer to 4.3, pg. 15 for examples of what to release)

(8.2) Heavenly Father, I choose to pray Your goodness and favor over _____ [insert the person (if offense/sin) from 1.5, pg. 6 or event (if loss) from 1.4, pg. 6] **which will provide the opportunity for joy and prosperity. I ask that You make the following good things happen:**

STEP 9: RECEIVING & REPLACING

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

~ John 8:31-32, NKJV

Despite what you have done or what has been done to you, God desires to redeem your true God-given identity — removing the distorted and devalued perception of yourself. Prayerfully go through the next step, asking the Holy Spirit to speak truth to you about who you are and who He is. Pray through the following prayers. Then, in your journal or notebook write down what He speaks to you or shows you. While it may take a moment to clearly hear His voice, it will often be the first word, thought, or picture that comes to your mind after you pray. Trust that this is Him speaking.

“Heavenly Father, thank You for desiring good for me. I trust that You will speak to me and that Your voice will be clear.”

(9.1) Jesus, because of this event, what LIE have I believed about myself?

(9.2) Heavenly Father, because of this event, what LIE have I believed about You?

(9.3) Jesus, what TRUTH do you want me to believe about myself?

(9.4) Heavenly Father, what TRUTH do you want me to believe about You?

(9.5) Jesus, I choose to give you the LIE that I am..." (Picture yourself handing Jesus the lie from 9.1.)

(9.6) Jesus, I choose to receive the TRUTH that I am..."
(Picture Jesus handing you the truth from 9.3.)

(9.7) Heavenly Father, I choose to give you the LIE that You are..." (Picture yourself handing the Father the lie from 9.2.)

(9.8) Heavenly Father, I choose to receive the TRUTH that You are..." (Picture the Father handing you the truth from 9.4.)

(9.9) Holy Spirit, in light of these truths about who I am and who the Heavenly Father is, what do You want to empower me to practically do to move forward from this event?"

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Share with a close friend or family member what you've worked through — talking through what you wrote down in your journal or notebook (e.g., your responses, thoughts, feelings, and prayers). Being vulnerable with this *Encouragement Partner*² will enhance the freedom and experience of this resource. This will encourage you to keep moving forward in forgiveness and pursuing wholeness.

Then, celebrate with that person. Celebrate the win this process has brought to your life. Get ice cream, go out for dinner, whatever it is. Celebrate!

When you've thoroughly celebrated, go through this process again, dealing with another person or offense. Continue revisiting this resource every time you feel anxious, frustrated, discouraged, or hurt by someone. Continue to write down your responses to these steps in a journal or notebook. Each journal or notebook will become a trophy of freedom — a symbol of what God is doing in your life and relationships.

Discuss each one with an *Encouragement Partner*.

Then, celebrate each one.

² The idea of an *Encouragement Partner* is described in detail in Nathan Steel's book, UNLOVE: A Book about Unlearning and Reshaping What You Know About God, Love, People, and Relationships., copyright © 2020 by Cultivate Publishing (see pages 119-120).

