

Anita Barker

The Way Out



THE WAY OUT

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Reflections on "The Way Out" by Dr Björn Ogéus

Anita Barker asked me to give some reflections on this book. I am honoured by the request and give them gladly. I was, of course, already familiar with it, but asked for more time to read it again. To my surprise it was like reading a new book! While rereading it, I gained deeper understanding, probably because there are many quotations from the Bible. Words in the Bible have that effect – each time you come back to them you discover even more thoughts and insights.

I see this book as a bridge between taking care of people in the Christian church and the care offered in the medical ward. As a Doctor working in the psychosomatic field among those suffering from traumas and often with an imbalance between senses, feelings and physical reactions, I believe that it is important to meet people on three levels. The first level is in the body and the physical reactions, the second level is in the senses, thoughts and images, and the third level is in the inner belief system and faith. This book takes an interest in all three levels and opens up a dialogue between counsellors in hospitals and in churches. Many hard words have been spoken between the two sides in the past, but Anita Barker does not do that. She is careful with her words, which is good. She speaks with authority, humility and a great deal of humour, rendering the book both easy to read and serious at the same time.

There are many case reports in the text that show that people's faith and thoughts open up the way to healing in the body. If you as a counsellor want to guide individuals to healing, it is important for you to meet them where they are.

The reader will find in these pages many valuable quotations from the Bible. You will also be inspired to contemplate other people's lives and the meaning of life itself.

I see this book as a very important document in our time, when love between people is turning cold. It offers hope. I would suggest that you take your time reading it. You can pick it up again and again, and always find more insights.

God bless you!

Björn Ogéus

Senior Doctor, Alfta Rehabilitation Centre, Sweden

Foreword from Pastor Håkan Gniste

I have the privilege of introducing to you one of the co-workers at our church, "The City of Refuge", in Uddevalla, Sweden. Anita and her family moved to our town almost two decades ago, after several years of evangelistic work elsewhere. She has been part of our leadership team for many years, so I can say that I know her very well.

Together with my wife Gunilla, Anita served in a counselling ministry established by the church, and people with all kinds of problems and from all walks of life have received help through that ministry.

We had received strong prophetic words about God providing keys to unlock prison doors, and through the years we have seen that, along with much experience, knowledge and revelation have increased. We have made mistakes, but we have learned that the challenge is always to point to Jesus as the Counsellor, not to a person or a method.

In this book you will find not theories removed from reality, but wisdom learned from experience in the sometimes-hard school of life. Anita is transparent in her teaching, sharing many of her own struggles and the freedom she has found in Christ. Her teaching and preaching, which has been appreciated in many churches, conferences and meetings around Sweden, is centred on Christ and the Word of God.

I have personally had the opportunity to minister in many countries on almost all continents, so it is a particular joy for me to be part of passing on the message of this valuable and practical book to the nations.

May God bless you as you read!

Håkan Gniste

Pastor of Fristaden ("The City of Refuge") Church, Uddevalla

The Way Out

Introduction

When I was twelve years I heard God telling me in an audible voice that I was to become a missionary. During my teenage years I prepared to go to Africa by studying English in England.

However, it took 40 years before I reached Africa — speaking in a women's conference in Nairobi, Kenya. That was a couple of months after this book was published in Swedish. The first day of the conference, before anyone knew anything about me, a very specific prophetic message came to me through a Kenyan evangelist. God spoke about a book on humility, saying that it was not only for Sweden, but was to be taken all over the world. I soon understood that this was the book.

Some time later, the Lord spoke about providing the book for Christian workers, especially in Africa and Asia, as a tool to prepare for the end-time harvest of broken people who have tried everything and need to be set free. God gave us the words from Ecclesiastes 11:1, "Cast your bread upon the water ...".

A couple of years ago a South African family moved to Sweden for missions work at a Youth With A Mission base close to my city. The wife, who is the daughter of Swedish missionaries, grew up speaking Swedish in South Africa. The Lord sent her to translate this book into English and adjust it to other cultures, with the assistance of a lady from New Zealand. An artist from Zimbabwe designed the cover. This book is translated into several languages, including Russian, Hindi and Tamil.

I am thankful to the people who have given so much of their time working with the book, as well as every individual whose testimony is shared. I know almost all of them personally, and the details are verified.

However, my greatest thank-you goes to the Lord who made it possible. All of it is a miracle. You see, I am registered as blind, with only two per cent vision. I have experienced many healing miracles and one day I will receive my sight, but until then, my life is a daily miracle. I read and write with the help of a video system that enlarges the text several times onto a big monitor. In my own strength, I can only use it for a few minutes at a time because I get "seasick" from the movement on the monitor. While working on this book I have known God's help in being

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able to write up to 10 hours a day without getting sick. To me, every page is a miracle and all the glory goes to Him! I trust your faith will be encouraged to believe God for impossible things in your life!

With today's computer technology this material is available for free on the Internet, www.thewayout.se. A DVD comprised of four half-hour programmes where I share on salvation, healing and deliverance is also available on the website. This can be used both in public meetings and by individuals. Please let others know.

God bless you.

Anita Barker



Chapter 1

How it all began

It was a sunny autumn morning. Four colleagues and I were on our way to a conference for a few days and the mood in the car was cheerful. Suddenly, blinded by the sun, another driver shot through an intersection and slammed straight into the right side of our car, where I was sitting. We were knocked far out into a field and the car was transformed into a heap of junk. Ambulances arrived, but at first I did not think I needed any attention from the medics. I was able to sit up, so nothing could be wrong with me, I reasoned. It was more important for the others lying on the stretchers to receive help. After being patched up, they were all able to go home. However, I was diagnosed as being in a severe state of shock and was taken to the intensive care ward. My blood pressure was extremely low, and I was initially examined every 15 minutes, then kept there for three days.

After this experience, I no longer dared to sit in the front seat of a car next to the driver. As far as I was concerned, the back seat was fine, but in the front seat you were in danger of being hit by another vehicle! My fear was not logical, but I completely panicked if ever I had to sit in the front. The poor driver of any car that I was riding in was warned about every vehicle that came close to us. My whitened knuckles clinging to the door handle would embarrass me. This phobia in connection with the front passenger seat did not improve with the years. Quite the opposite in fact, it intensified.

Eight years passed, and I was asked by the Lutheran Church to lead a seminar on inner healing at their Easter conference. During preparation in prayer for this two months beforehand, something completely new happened to me. The Holy Spirit began to speak about various needs in the lives of the participants who would be there. In a very detailed fashion I received words of knowledge concerning approximately 30 different situations where people needed prayer or help in order to forgive and to be set free. How incredible that God already knew who were coming as participants, before they had even registered!

At the conference, there was a response to all of these words except one. "Someone has been in a car accident and is afraid of riding in a car," I said. "If it is not true for anybody here, then it must be for me", I added. Yes, it was for me, but nobody knew how to pray about it. "I'll pray first, then you repeat it after me as a prayer for me," I said to those who were helping me. For a few minutes we prayed and asked the Lord to erase all details around the accident from my memory and my subconscious. We prayed that the effects of shock would be taken away and that this fear of riding in the front passenger seat of a car would disappear. I felt nothing during the prayer, but the result was amazing. All fear was gone! I found I was completely at peace when riding in the front seat of a car, and that peace has remained for 15 years now.

At the same conference a word of knowledge came from the Holy Spirit: "Pigsty . . . pigpen in a barn, as a child". "This has something to do with fear," I said. An older man volunteered that it was for him, and told us that when he was a child he had lived on a farm. "Often when the sows were about to have a litter, we had to take turns watching over them. When I was ten or twelve years old, I fell asleep in the sty. Since that time, I have had nightmares that I'm locked in a pigsty among huge sows and I can't get out. I've talked to psychiatrists, but they can't help," he said. The man had also sought deliverance from possible demonic influence without result. We prayed that the Lord would remove all terrifying memories of the pigsty as a child, that he would be released from any shock and freed from nightmares. He was amazed at God's care in describing his situation. Later we received a report that all the pigs were gone from his dreams and he could sleep in peace. What freedom after 50 years of torment!

We also prayed in private for a woman who responded to a word of knowledge that she had been involved in incest. She was five years old when it started and her father was the offender. He would draw dirty pictures and give them to her. Forty years after the incidents she could still see those pictures in front of her. The woman was plagued with bitterness and hatred towards her father, who had destroyed so much of her life. We spoke about the necessity to forgive him, to lay down her right to bitterness and hatred, and to confess these feelings as sin. As an act of the will, she chose to forgive and bless her father. Having done that, we prayed and asked the Lord to erase the negative memories and

the images of the dirty drawings. About six months later I happened to meet this woman on a train, and she told me that she was completely free. She no longer had any bad thoughts, and the dirty pictures never surfaced in her mind again.

That conference opened up a completely new world for me: prayer for explicit needs, with very tangible answers. Thereafter many ministry opportunities opened up to us, where we prayed and sought God for His words of knowledge about people's specific needs and life situations.

At one place where we preached on the importance of forgiveness, a word of knowledge came about someone who had been involved in a kidnapping. A woman came forward and told us how a few days before she had gone to hospital to give birth to her third child, a couple of men came to her house with her husband, from whom she was separated at the time. They took her two children and disappeared. The police were called, but they could not find the children. She received a letter from her husband saying that she would never see the children again, and for more than six months she did not know if they were alive or dead. A trial eventually took place in which she was given custody of the children, but her ex-husband disappeared with them once again. It was three years later, when they started school, that she found out where they were. By that time, however, they had been so threatened and frightened by their father that they did not dare speak with her. The only contact she had with them during their school years was when she went to the schoolyard, stood outside the gate and watched them from afar.

A short time before we met, the sons had looked her up and given her flowers. They were now grown men. At the end of our meeting, the woman prayed and asked for forgiveness for all the bitterness and hate she felt towards her ex-husband, who had caused her so much pain. She expressed forgiveness to him and set him free from the wrong he had done. Then the intercessor prayed that the Lord would heal her inner hurts and remove the painful memories of those difficult years.

Six months later we returned to the same place for another meeting. A woman who positively glowed led the praise and worship. She asked if we recognised her, but we did not. It was the same woman! She had completely changed, and told us that the Lord had removed all the dif-

difficult aspects of that situation. When her mother had at one point mentioned the kidnapping to her, she hardly knew what she was talking about because the memory had become so distant. She also told us that when her youngest son had his 18th birthday, the father came and gave him a car as a present. The father and this child had not even met before. When the woman had decided to forgive her ex-husband, she had set him free to do positive things. He was no longer bound in his sin. She had not said anything to him, but something significant had happened on a spiritual level and now the situation could no longer hurt her.

Imagine the miracles that can take place when we choose to forgive! This woman now has a wonderful relationship with her sons and feels that the stolen years have been restored. In addition, she is now able to serve the Lord full time through music.

Chapter 2

Personally . . .

At the age of 12 I felt God calling me to a life of ministry. I had become a Christian a short while earlier when one day while walking down the street, without a single person near me, I heard a voice very clearly say, "You're going to be a missionary". It is the only time I have ever heard God speak in an audible voice. I was glad, but thought, "I wouldn't dare speak in front of a whole crowd of people when they commission me to service". However, the fear of speaking in public gradually disappeared. Then, right before I turned 17, I began to travel as an evangelist.

A couple of years later I became part of a team, one of Sweden's first music groups to use electric instruments in churches. We were employed by the Free Lutheran Church and held campaigns throughout Sweden. Schools, prisons, department stores and town squares were on our daily schedule. At the evening meetings we prayed with many people for salvation and ministered to people with deep needs. A longing awoke in me to help people in need.

After preparatory studies, I started at the College of Social Studies in Stockholm. During my first semester I read the book, "The Cross and the Switchblade", by David Wilkerson. This book described Christian work among youth gangs and drug addicts in New York City in a fascinating way. "I want to go there," was my response. As an 18-year-old I had worked for six months with the Salvation Army's social work in the slum district of London. Courage and a good deal of longing for adventure were in my heart. It was soon settled. "The Cross and the Switchblade" ended up on the desks of three different scholarship committees together with an application to allow me to study this work for six months. To the surprise of many, I received two of the scholarships, one of which was from a Royal fund.

In 1969 I took a break from my studies in Sweden and began traveling around in the USA visiting different Teen Challenge centres. This turned into a full year in New York City and Detroit, and was an incredibly valuable and educational experience.

When it was time to head home, I sensed instead God's calling in a very real way to change from social to theological studies. Miraculously, within a few days I was accepted, my finances were taken care of, and a visa to study at Faith School of Theology in Maine was granted. This was a three-year Pentecostal Bible school programme that trained pastors and missionaries. During my first year in Maine I met my future husband, and soon changed my last name from Ivarson to Barker. A couple of years later, we were both ordained as ministers. My husband continued with college and graduate school in Minnesota and Kansas.

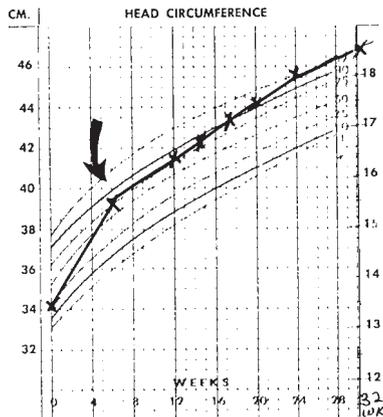
Then came a period during which we experienced, in a tremendously powerful way, God's miraculous ability to heal. At the age of six weeks, our first son, Michael, was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, or water on the brain, and was immediately admitted to the university hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota. On the second day a routine chest x-ray was performed, and a tumour the same size as his heart was discovered next to his spine. The doctors informed us that a test called a pneumo-encephalogram would be performed the next day, but warned us that a child had died during a similar test the previous week. My entire world crumpled as I sat there beside Michael's bed. Because of all these reports, I knew that Michael was going to die. I planned what I would do with his bed and clothes. No doctor could talk to me because all I did was cry.

Suddenly, the Scripture verse came into my mind from Philippians 4:6,7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." However, the verse had come to me in Swedish, which made me realise that it was from the Lord, because I had been thinking only in English for quite some time. All my anxiety changed to peace! At first I thought that I had gone over the edge because I now felt so happy, even though we did not even know if Michael would survive.

That evening we turned Michael over to the Lord. We said, "Now You can do what You wish. Either heal him or take him home to You". An amazing peace and joy filled us, and we sat for several hours singing praises. Before we went to bed that night we felt a strong assurance that God was going to step in and many doctors would witness a miracle.

We had just moved to the city and were far away from friends and relatives. No one laid hands on Michael, sent a prayer cloth or anointed him with oil. But Jesus was there!

And what God had said came true. The next day the doctors asked what had happened to me, because I was so happy. My answer was that God was going to take care of Michael. A week later the doctors confirmed that, on the second day, Michael's head had suddenly and inexplicably stopped growing abnormally. There was no need for an operation to place a shunt in his head to drain accumulated water from the brain. A week later they planned to do exploratory surgery on the tumour in his back. It was believed that it was a cyst or lump of fat. They said that the operation should only take about 20 minutes and Michael's father did not need to come in. Three and a half hours of surgery later, the doctor appeared and announced that it was cancer. It was now clear that if Michael had not come in because of the hydrocephalus, they would never have found the tumour in time. A couple of years later a doctor said that they were not sure how to do post-operative check-ups on tumours of that type, as they had not seen any survivors. Tumours like this are never discovered in time, because newborn babies are not routinely x-rayed.



Throughout the three weeks of daily radiation treatments, Michael did not lose weight and did not become sick. Doctors had no explanation. Sixty doctors convened for a special conference about the "miracle baby". Nothing followed a normal pattern. Altogether, over 200 paediatric spe-

cialists were involved. It was stated in a report written afterwards that of all the specialists who examined Michael, none had a better explanation than the Barker family, that this was a miracle.

It was expected that Michael would be late in developing or even retarded because of all that had happened, and that he would have problems as an adult. But with weekly examinations, it was possible to see that he was developing quicker than other children were during their first year! Thirteen years later we were visiting in Minneapolis and called in to speak to one of the members of the medical team. They told us that Michael was regularly featured in their lectures. The surgeon, who is known worldwide, said the following: "This is the most remarkable scientific document in medical history, and we have no explanation". Today Michael is 30 years old. He served in the US military for seven years, a military policeman in top condition. A complete and total miracle! Today, he is studying at a Christian university preparing for missions.

Through the years a calling and great longing has been present within me to minister God's miraculous power to heal sick bodies, to set captive people free, and to restore tormented souls. When human solutions are not enough — healthcare, medicine, and psychiatry — I want to see God intervene!

What began at a Lutheran Renewal conference 15 years ago, where God's Holy Spirit revealed explicit situations and needs, continued. Prior to many of our services we prayed for several days and received words of knowledge about abuse, rape, accidents, death threats, inheritance problems, incest and much more. After a meeting, prayer for all who responded to these needs could last for two or three hours.

My pastor recommended that I participate in counselling sessions for a period of time. "Learn how to handle problems and situations the old-fashioned way, through conversation and individual prayer. This way you'll learn all about what is involved, and you can help people attending the meetings with greater understanding and authority."

For the first year I spent two days a week listening and learning from our pastor's wife, who is an experienced counsellor. Since I was in silent prayer during their conversation, it was easy to receive images and words of knowledge, which served as keys to the situations con-

cerned. This was the beginning of a very interesting learning time in the school of the Lord, and this counselling ministry continued for ten years. I saw how different circumstances caused various problems in people's lives, and how the Lord can heal them and set them free when they deal with these issues. The knowledge I share in this book did not come cheaply however, because I have learned most of it through mistakes that I have made over the years, and also through my own failures and detours that the Lord has dealt with. In areas where you have received help yourself, you have greater faith for others. If you have been comforted, so you can share that comfort with others, as it says in 2 Corinthians 1:4, "... [He] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." Sometimes when we learn new things we place too much emphasis on them, but today I believe that there is a healthy balance in what I have learned.

What I now share is from experience, and not as a result of something I have read in psychology books. As I have been visually handicapped with only two percent vision since I was a teenager, I have not been able to read books for 40 years, except a few which have been "read" onto cassette tapes. In our home we had bookcases filled with books on psychology and Christian counselling as my husband received a Ph.D. in these subjects. But the closest I have ever come to them is when I have dusted and moved them a few times.

After ten years of experience in preaching, counselling and intercessory prayer, I would like to share a number of faith-building and encouraging testimonies. I am a simple person who does not have a lot of opinions about everyone and everything. I am not able to discuss and debate all sorts of topics. Neither can I write a profound, psychological book. But I know Jesus! Some simple, biblical, foundational truths have been revealed to me and I have seen many people's lives changed. God's miraculous power has brought release and people have been set free from various bondages such as fear, different kinds of phobias, shame, self-hatred, and much more.

Perhaps you will recognise yourself or someone else you know in the testimonies I share. I want to convey these simple truths to any of you who are in a similar situation, so that hope and faith in God's transform-

ing power can be yours also. Some of the biblical terms may be new to you, and you might not be sure what all the words mean. I will express myself simply, but the significance or implication of some words may take some time to understand. However, salvation does not depend on how much of the Bible you understand or can explain, just as being granted a residence permit in a country does not depend on how well you speak the language. When I first arrived in the States, I discovered that even the animals made different sounds to the ones in Sweden! The pig does not say "nöff, nöff" in English, but "oink, oink". The Swedish birds say "kvivitt" and the dogs say "vov vov". A Swedish rooster says "kuckeliku", but now I had to learn "cock-a-doodle-doo".

If I hurt myself, I had to learn not to say "aj", but "ouch". Understandably, I got confused with all the new words and once when I hurt myself I exclaimed, "oink, oink!" like the pig. Similarly, all these new biblical words may seem daunting to you, but do not be discouraged; they will soon become familiar!

A pastor had just ended his sermon. He announced that he would preach on Noah and the ark on the following Sunday, and gave the scriptural reference for the congregation to read ahead of time. A couple of boys noticed something interesting about the placement of the story in the Bible. They later slipped into the church and glued two pages of the pulpit Bible together.

The next Sunday, the preacher got up to read his text. "Noah took unto himself a wife," he began, "and she was" — he turned the page to continue — "three hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high."

He paused, scratched his head, turned the page back, read it silently, and turned the page again. Then he looked up at his congregation and said, "I've been reading this old Bible for nearly fifty years, but there are still some things in it that are hard to believe."

 *...[He] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." 2 Corinthians 1:4*

Chapter 3

Transformation

Four years ago, I witnessed one of the most powerful transformations of people's lives through the gospel. It was during a one-day seminar held by the Swedish Lutheran Church, where I had been asked to teach on reconciliation and forgiveness. After the morning session it was time for lunch, and we were told that three Asian refugees who had received deportation notices had prepared the meal for us. They were not Christians, being of Muslim background, but the church, the bishop, and others were helping them to appeal the deportation order. Two of the refugees were a married couple, who had been tortured and their five-year-old daughter killed during torture in their homeland.

We had a deliciously spicy lunch, and I then went out to the kitchen to talk to the couple, finding to my surprise that the husband spoke fluent English. I asked him where he had learned his English and he told me he had studied medicine in the United States for many years. We talked about universities and I mentioned that my husband had also done his doctorate in the States. This stirred up the man's interest and he asked if he could attend the afternoon session. He seated himself in the front row, while his companions remained at the door.

After an hour of teaching on the power of reconciliation and forgiveness, we began to pray for the sick. The Lord gave us words of knowledge regarding some physical needs. First, we prayed for the pastor's wife. She was instantly healed of a sinus infection and immediately testified about it. The next word of knowledge was that somebody had pain in the left shoulder. What I did not know — which was a good thing — was that the Asian man had been seriously injured during torture, and had lost the use of his left arm and hand. His back and one of his legs had also been injured and he could only walk short distances. He suffered from severe pain and had repeatedly visited a clinic specialising in the treatment of torture victims to reduce his pain, but to no avail.

When that word of knowledge was spoken out this man stood up, and out of my mouth came words that I would not have said of my own

accord. I asked him, "Are you willing to forgive the people that tortured and killed your child?" Tears ran down his cheeks as he nodded and repeated a short prayer after me. He asked for forgiveness for his hatred and bitterness, and spoke out forgiveness to those who had tortured him. I then laid my hands on his shoulder and prayed for healing, and immediately his arm shot up into the air. "The pain is gone!" he exclaimed. He sat for a long while with both arms raised in the air, just as we do when we praise the Lord.

We continued to pray for others. After some time somebody asked if we could pray for the tortured man again, as he also had pain in his back. The power of God came over him once more and, as happens sometimes, he fell to the floor. He lay there for over half an hour, wept and cried out, "Now I have met my God after all these years of searching!"

He had the experience of a lifetime, similar to Paul's experience when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He was saved and totally healed from the injuries he had suffered during torture. Afterwards, he testified that when he woke up the following morning, he looked at himself in the mirror and said, "I'm a new man!" He shaved his bushy beard and trimmed his untidy hair. Later, he went for an eight-kilometre walk with his wife, and tinkered with the car for three days before its annual inspection. He was now able to handle the tools, even with his left hand.

The church supported the refugees in a wonderful way. This restored man attended Bible school for a year before the deportation order was activated. After a lot of drama, he and his wife are now working in their homeland.

Hindu turns to Christ – healed after 27 years of suffering

A young family from our church works as missionaries in India. There they have met a woman with a powerful testimony. Her name is Pyari and she is in her fifties. For a large part of her life she knew only sickness and pain. For 27 years she was bedridden, with growths and swellings over her whole body. She sought help from many hospitals and doctors but found no relief. She visited temples, mosques and other religious places and paid large sums to witchdoctors, but nothing helped.

One day an older woman came to visit her, who had herself been healed of a tumour on her throat, and told Pyari, "There is a prayer

meeting close by and the pastor prays in Jesus' name. I was healed there. I think you should go along." Pyari talked about it with her family and the following Sunday they took her by bicycle rickshaw to the meeting. It was a house church, and the meetings were held on the top floor of the building. When Pyari came to the steps she wondered how she would climb them. During all her years of sickness she had never been able to climb stairs. Then suddenly she felt two hands behind her, taking hold of her. Though she could not see them, she felt them lift her and they carried her up the flight of stairs to the meeting.

She listened to the sermon and, convicted of sin, she accepted Jesus as her Saviour. The pastor then placed his hand on her and prayed for healing. It felt as if electric shocks were flowing through her whole body, many bands were loosened from around her and burdens fell off. She says, "I was free and healed and walked home by myself".

At home she placed her hands on her daughter, who had an eye disease. She was healed immediately and they were both filled with peace and joy. The following Sunday Pyari and her daughter returned to the church, together with Pyari's husband, who had by then been healed of a blood disorder. They related all the things that Jesus had done for them and how for the first time in their lives they felt real peace, love and joy. Everything around them had changed.

Pyari continued to testify to the sick. Soon 16 people had been saved and the pastor started meetings in her home, too. Now the group is 100 strong and they have five meetings on a Sunday. Hinduism could not help Pyari, but Jesus has given her a wonderful new life. At present she is attending a Bible school to be equipped further to help others.

He read the name of Jesus in the Koran

I once met a man from a radical Muslim country where there is capital punishment for people who convert to Christianity. His testimony of how he met Jesus is incredible. The encounter took place during his childhood. He had terrible nightmares of dying and not being able to enter heaven. His parents tried everything to free him from the dreams, which tormented him constantly. The Muslim priests knew what to do: "Memorise the Koran!"

One day as he was memorising, he came across the name of Jesus, and was unable to continue reading. He started praying to Jesus, and

the nightmares ceased. Later, Jesus came to him regularly in his dreams and taught him about the Christian life. This was teaching that he could never have received or heard about in his country.

Nothing is impossible for God! Not even a whole country with closed borders to the gospel can keep Him from reaching you with His power!

Meditation leader in Sweden

My pastor was in India assisting with a campaign. One of the other co-workers was a happy, lively lady in her 70's with a fascinating life history. At her confirmation when she was 15 she had an experience with God which impressed her deeply. From that moment on, her life became a search for that inner sense of God's presence which she had felt at her confirmation. Tragically, there was no one she knew who could clearly direct her back to God, whom she had met in her youth. However, a healthy fear of God followed her into adulthood.

Her search led her into Transcendental Meditation (TM). In 1962 she attended TM's first international gathering in Europe. Through meditation she should supposedly find her way to God, who according to TM, lived inside every human being.

There were some good times and good fellowship, but she was never certain whether she was going the right way, and was always trying to break through the barrier between her and God. Not even 15 days of fasting and meditation helped her reach the goal for which she longed. She was so disappointed!

Three years later she once again tried to find the answers at the Maharishi's meditation academy, but without results. She had become one of the leaders of TM in Sweden by this time, but after 12 years changed her meditation techniques and her guru. The Indian Maharaj Ji was then said to be God on earth, and now she felt she had come up to a higher level. For a period of time she was the leader of the "Divine Light Mission" movement, but after 12 years she began to question the whole thing.

In 1987, after 25 years, she left meditation and reached a "no man's land" in her life. She cried out to God, "If You're there, show me how I can make contact with You!" It was shortly after this that she received an invitation from a non-Christian friend to attend a meeting where a well-known evangelist was speaking, and this became the answer to

her prayer. As she listened she was touched by a purity that she had never known before. That summer she received salvation – and felt the same joy she had experienced at her confirmation all those years ago when she had first welcomed Jesus into her life! What she had sought for so long, she had at last found.

Searching in eastern religions

A young man I have met on a number of occasions told me his story. His family had been deeply affected by his father's alcoholism. While still a child, he had to look after himself in circumstances that were difficult physically, mentally and spiritually, and as a protection from pain he developed a hard outer shell. He drove himself to be good at everything, trying to get the love and affirmation he did not receive at home.

However, the outer mask hid a web of lies and fantasies. The gap widened between reality and how he wanted his life to be. "I became more and more empty, my outer shell got harder and my heart grew smaller and smaller. I also became very good at having no feelings or expectations", he says.

Beginning as a teenager, his search for a deeper meaning to life led him from politics, to psychology, to philosophy. Studying the existential writers, he concluded with them that: "Life is coincidental, meaningless, empty and negative". But this brought no satisfaction, and he turned to the spiritual arena.

He looked into everything from folk mythology to the largest world religions. Hinduism's theory of existence, yoga and meditation came first, then Buddhism and Taoism, and a mixture of the two called Zen. Over many years of daily "emptying himself" through meditation, he decided to become a Buddhist monk in a monastery.

The years of searching, however, still left his heart empty. Looking back now, he is aware that God was with him all the way, making small adjustments and interventions until, in April 1999, he found himself "up against a wall" before Jesus.

He was lying down reading about Jesus' crucifixion in a simple version of one of the gospels, when he had an overwhelming sense that he was being challenged to answer a question. "Is it true that I have died for you? Yes, or no? It's time to decide." Shakily and a little doubtfully,

he responded, "Yes, Jesus, yes...".

"That's when I repented, met the One who had created me and who saved me", he says now, with joy in his voice. "Jesus filled the emptiness within, made my heart soft and warm. He took my lies and became my Truth, my Life, my Love and my Security. He also led me to the Father. That day in April, I was born again and started my walk with Jesus, and one day I will meet Him. I am no longer searching because I have been found!"

When God created humankind, He created a place within each person that He alone can fill; consequently, if He is not there, we feel empty. We try to fill this void with many things, such as material possessions, career, and leisure activities. When nothing satisfies, some people numb themselves with alcohol, drugs, or by searching in various religions, ideologies, and even the occult — all to fill the void within.

The search can become very confusing as different religions claim that they have all the answers to all of life's problems. But if we compare Christianity to other religions, we can see that the crucial, determining difference between Christianity and all the others lies in how we are made righteous, that is, how we obtain a right standing with God, become sinless, or become a good person.

All other religions require man to do good deeds and to act in a certain way to attain a clear conscience and connect with God or the supernatural. Most often sacrifices are required. Believing in Jesus is the complete opposite! According to the Bible, Jesus has already done everything that will ever be required. He took your place and died for your sins; He rose again to make you righteous, so that His life could be yours. The only thing you need to do is receive. This is what we call grace, which means undeserved favour! It is this grace which transforms lives!

Father and son

Although I cannot verify the following story, it has a profound message for us.

A pastor stepped up to his pulpit, but before beginning his sermon, he introduced an elderly man who was visiting that evening. He told the congregation that the guest was a minister and one of his dearest friends

since childhood. He then invited the man to share for a few moments. The old gentleman stepped forward and began to speak.

"A father, his son and a friend of his son were sailing off the Pacific coast," he began, "when a fast approaching storm blocked every attempt to get back to the shore. The father was an experienced sailor, but he couldn't keep the boat upright in the 15-metre high waves. Eventually it capsized and the three were swept into the ocean."

The old man stopped for a moment, glancing at two teenagers who, for the first time since the service began, were looking somewhat interested. Then he went on.

"The father managed to grab a lifeline attached to the boat, then realised he had to make the most excruciating decision of his life: To which boy would he throw the other end of the line? He had only seconds to make the decision. He knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. His inner agony could not be matched by the turbulence of the waves around him. He made his decision.

"I love you, son!" he shouted, and threw the lifeline to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging sea. His body was never recovered."

By this time, the two teenagers were sitting straight up in their pew, anxiously waiting for the outcome of the story.

"The father knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus," the man continued, "and he couldn't bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into eternity without Him. So, he sacrificed his son to save the son's friend.

"How great the love of God is, that He should do the same for us! Our heavenly Father sacrificed His only Son so that we could be saved. I urge you to accept His offer to rescue you. Take hold of the lifeline He's throwing out to you in this church service."

With that, the old man turned and sat back down. The pastor then gave a brief sermon with an invitation at the end. No one responded.

However, only minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side. "That was a nice story," commented one of the boys politely, "but I don't think it was very realistic for a father to give up his only son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian."

"Well, you've got a point there," the old man replied, glancing down at his worn Bible. Then he smiled as he looked up again at the boys and said, "It really isn't very realistic, is it? But that story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up His Son for me. You see, I was that father and your pastor is my son's friend."

The criminal and the judge

The following story is a well-known illustration of salvation. Twin brothers grew up together, but were very different. One of them loved books and was always reading and studying. The other was mostly out on the street. The years went by. One became a lawyer and judge, but the other got involved in a life of crime.

The day came when the brothers met in a courtroom — one as judge, the other as the accused. The verdict was "guilty", and the judge handed down the severest punishment that he could to his brother, a very high fine for the crime committed. However, his very next action was to write out a cheque from his personal account to cover the fine, so that his brother could go free. The price for his freedom had been paid!

Jesus did the same for you and me when He took our punishment on the cross 2000 years ago. Romans 3:23 says that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", and Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

At what point did the criminal receive his freedom? Was it when his brother wrote out the cheque? No. It was when the criminal reached out and received it! We need to receive Jesus as our personal Saviour. That is God's gift to us! John 1:12 tells us, "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God".

What happens when you receive Jesus?

You have the assurance of eternal life in heaven, according to John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

From the moment you receive Jesus as your Saviour and ask for forgiveness for your sins, all of your past is gone, from God's perspective.

Isaiah 43:25 says, "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more". God does this for

His own sake, to be able to have a relationship and fellowship with you. Is that not amazing? When God looks at you, He no longer sees your old failures and foul-ups. Today many of our mistakes are recorded in databases: traffic violations, credit ratings, etc., but in God's Kingdom it is different. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!".

A criminal record that disappeared

This happened to a friend of ours, when her criminal record was literally wiped clean. She had been a drug addict and dealer in California, where she had served a long jail sentence for murder and for her participation in Hell's Angels, among other things. She had been in isolation longer than any other woman in California's penal history, and was so aggressive and violent that she had become like an animal.

After her prison sentence, she ended up in hospital. They thought that she was dead, so she was laid out on a stretcher in a corridor with a sheet over her. Somebody walked past her and said, "Jesus loves you!" Later she told how she had heard the words and thought, "Can anybody love me? I have to get to know Him!"

A miracle took place and within a couple of days the woman was out of hospital. She then went to a church and met this Jesus whom she had heard about in the hospital, became a Christian and was completely transformed! Eventually she went through some pastoral training with us.

During that time she wanted to get her driver's licence, and it was then that they needed to check her criminal record. To her and everyone else's surprise, word came that she had no criminal record! A miracle had taken place! This woman really got to experience the truth of the Word, that the old has passed and the new has come.

If you are already saved, born again, or have a personal relationship with Jesus (these are just different ways to express the same thing), you can be secure in the knowledge that from the moment you confess your sin and ask for forgiveness, you are forgiven. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness".

Free from a lifetime in prison

When we talk about release from different types of prisons, obviously we are not only talking about criminal institutions and erasing criminal records. However, I want to mention a 33-year-old Latin American man in our church who was released miraculously.

As a 17-year-old he moved to Mexico. His mother, a Christian, had visited him once, but then lost contact. He made no more contact with her because he was too ashamed. He had become involved in drugs and crime, was caught, and had been sentenced to 42 years in prison!

His mother continued to pray the entire time for her son in Mexico. His prison sentence was reduced, first to 37 years, then to 25 years. Suddenly, after five years and nine months in prison, something inexplicable happened. Someone came in and told him to pack his things because he was free to go. He thought it was a cruel joke, but he was shown the paper stating the decision. Now suddenly, he was a free man. This was a miracle, because such a thing almost never happens!

He went back to his own country, and his mother's home. At first she did not recognise him, after all the years of drug abuse and imprisonment, but when she heard him laugh she knew it was her son. Soon all her prayers for him were to be answered. He went with her to church, and by his third service he had accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. God's miraculous power set him free and healed both his mind and body. Peace and harmony replaced all the chaos within.

This happened almost eight years ago. He is now married to a childhood friend who came to our town as a refugee ten years ago. This friend had just become a Christian in our church, then went to visit her home country, where they met. Peace, joy and harmony radiate from this couple. Nobody can guess what his past was like. With a Bible in his hand he says, "This is better than a gun!"

This is freedom!

A most dramatic church service

At a weekend of meetings where I was speaking, I met a middle-aged man in a wheelchair before the Friday service began. My nose told me he was not sober, and when I tried to shake his hand, he snapped at me. He was one of those typical "hard cases", who had been a drug addict most of his life, and people were afraid of him.

When I had barely begun the sermon, the drunkard interrupted in a loud voice, "Is there a God? My wife has multiple sclerosis. I have cancer and they're going to amputate my leg!"

Before I had time to think, the Holy Spirit took over, and I was at the man's side with the microphone. Taking his hand, I said, "I have only two percent vision, so I can't see your face. But God is still very good." Then I began speaking about the goodness of God, and soon tears began to run down his cheeks. Later he asked for a Bible, saying he would return with his wife.

The next day, another drug addict arrived an hour before the meeting and soon fell asleep in the third row, snoring loudly. Then the man from the previous night came with his wife, both in wheelchairs, and their taxi driver set them in the first row. The most dramatic service of my life began.

We were still in a time of worship when the first man woke up and set off for the restroom. However, as he was high on drugs and alcohol, he turned left in front of the pulpit instead of right, and fell over the man in the wheelchair, who sat with his leg straight out in front of him because of two irreparable fractures. Now lying on his leg unable to get up was a 110-kilo drunkard, and he was in terrible pain. He begged us to call an ambulance. Some people struggled to remove the drunk man and my sermon disappeared out of my head. Eventually one of our team members prayed, "God, you must have more resources than the Emergency Room, so I ask you to numb his leg." Instantly the pain disappeared and he remained free of pain for the rest of the day.

It was now time to preach. The words from Matthew 9:36 came to my mind, where Jesus had compassion on the harassed and helpless crowds. The sermon turned into a dialogue with the couple in the front row. I took their hands and said, "I want to represent the Christians, and I ask you to forgive us for being so busy with our own affairs — the songbooks, the colours of the curtains and so on — that we haven't been considering the people that are harassed and helpless. This is where you fit in, especially after what you've just been through. Will you forgive us?"

Together we wept. The man said, "I already forgave the guy who fell on my leg. He didn't mean to. But if this had happened a couple of days ago I would've killed him!" Thank God for renewing minds. We could

have had an even more dramatic service.

The wife then shared that during the night she had dreamt that her husband had attended a meeting. When she awoke and found the Bible on the table, she realised it had actually happened. We had no altar call, but after the meeting they both commented on the joy and peace they had felt — "in spite of the accident", added the man.

That evening they called the pastor and the next day received Jesus as their Saviour. At their baptism six months later, the wife testified that she had got saved on the Sunday, but the man shared that for him it had happened on the Friday evening when the Spirit of God touched his heart. What a miracle of reconciliation!

The Lord also miraculously delivered the couple from alcohol abuse, and they had a couple of years of peace before the man went to be with the Lord. We heard that someone had prayed for him for many years, and now he was saved for eternity.

A preacher and the president of a soap factory went for a walk together. The president said, "What good is Christianity? Look at all the trouble and misery of the world! It's still there, even after years, thousands of years, of teaching about goodness and truth and love and peace. Still there, after all the sermons and teaching. If Christianity is good and true, why is it like this?"

The preacher said nothing. They continued walking until he noticed a child playing in the gutter. Then he commented, "Look at that child. You say that soap makes people clean, but look at the dirt on that youngster. What good is soap? With all the soap in the world, for all these years, the child is still filthy. I wonder how effective soap is, really!"

The president of the soap factory protested, "But preacher, soap can't do any good unless it's used!"

"Exactly," replied the preacher. "Exactly."

 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Chapter 4

A God of miracles

The Oxford English dictionary gives the following definition of a miracle: "A marvellous event due to some supernatural agency." A synonym is a "wonder", and the definition of "wonder" is, "Miracle, strange or remarkable thing or specimen or performance or event".

I would like to tell you about some inexplicable and supernatural occurrences in various areas. With these I want to encourage your faith in God and show you that He can handle you, your situation, your problems and your physical and psychological needs.

One of the most well-known miracles in the Bible was when the children of Israel left Egypt and walked through the Red Sea. This has often been used as a picture of salvation, which is the biggest and most incredible miracle. The time in Egypt under Pharaoh's oppression of slavery is symbolic of today's way of life in the world. We speak about the "slavery of sin". Moses is a picture of Jesus, who sets us free. You can read more about this in Exodus chapter 14. Hundreds of thousands of people fled, on foot, from Pharaoh's army of horses and chariots. Here they certainly needed a miracle! When they came to the Red Sea, God said to Moses, "Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground" (verse 16). In verse 23 it says, "The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea." Verse 26 continues, "Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen"".

It happened just as the Lord had said, and in verse 28 it says that not one of them escaped. In verse 29 we read that "the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left". There are some sceptics who maintain that the water was only about 20-30 cm deep when the Israelites walked over. They say that is the only way that so many people would be able to walk through the sea. That of course would make the miracle even greater, if you think that the great Egyptian army with horses and chariots all drowned

in a few centimetres of water!

The Bible has many more stories of miracles that defy the laws of nature, but now I will tell you some from the present day.

Child dies – but comes back to life!

That God is the God of miracles, and still does wonders today, can be confirmed by the following testimony. The grandmother of the boy in this story has attended our discipleship school, and his big sister attends our school. The parents were Christians only in name, but got saved after this incident. I must also say that none of them were medically trained in any way.

A few days before the 18th of May 1986, the mother in this family dreamt that her son was taken away from her. She also saw that he came back to her behind a glass pane, in a coach on wheels. Under the window was written "Christopher 2". Christopher means "Christ bearer" and is one of the boy's names.

At the age of two months, which is what the number "2" referred to in the dream, the baby died suddenly of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). The parents had felt they needed to check on the baby, and had found him lifeless — ashen, his body limp and heavy. They began praying, attempting artificial respiration and CPR while they did so. He started to breathe again. When they arrived at the hospital 25 minutes after they had found him, he had a body temperature of only 26° C instead of the normal 37° C. On the respirator he was cramping, which is a sign of brain damage. He was then put in an incubator. His eyes stared blankly and were totally unresponsive. Two weeks went by without any change in his condition, but they were reminded of the dream, and this gave them hope.

Christopher's great-grandmother prayed for him, and gave words of comfort: "Go home, your son will live!" One day his mother realised that his three-year-old sister also needed some attention, so together they prayed and God gave them the understanding the boy would awake that same day! The husband, who had been at the hospital, went to pick up the mother and sister. The doctors had not been able to revive the boy, and with grim silence were not giving them any hope. However, the mother laid her hand on the little boy and said, "Chris, Mummy is here!" Suddenly his dead eyes sparked with life and he began to move his

arms and legs! All glory to the Lord! Just as in the dream, he came back to them from behind a glass pane in a coach on wheels – the incubator! The doctors examined him again and asked if it really was the same boy!

On the 7th of June they came home as a family. The boy is a totally healthy young man today, without any side effects from this experience. The family has also been blessed with two more children. What a wonderful God we have!

The family had received the following verse from Isaiah 65:23: "They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them."

An angel gives a new kidney

I know a young woman from a neighbouring town who was miraculously healed of cancerous tumours. The tumours were inoperable, and the doctors gave her only six months to live. After radiation and chemotherapy her kidneys had shut down, and she was put on dialysis. One of her kidneys was dead, and the other had minimum function left. The dead kidney was going to be removed, but the woman had told the doctors several times that an angel would come with a new kidney for her.

When she went for tests on the day of the operation, the results all came back normal. The tests were done again, because the doctors suspected that the test results had been mixed up, but they showed the same results again. They performed exploratory surgery and confirmed the results of the test instead of removing the kidney.

When the woman woke up after the procedure, the doctor asked, "Did you see the angel coming with the new kidney?" She now had a completely healthy kidney. She had not seen an angel, but a couple of nights later her apartment was lit up and she thought she had forgotten to switch off her lights. However, when she looked up she saw an angel so tall that he had to stoop. He had a sword pointed toward the floor and the woman understood that the fight for her life was over!

This woman got married and had children even though the doctors had told her that her organs were so badly damaged that she could never conceive. When she was about to deliver, the doctors prepared her for the fact that the baby would probably be malformed, but she

gave birth to a healthy baby boy!

With her second pregnancy, her ovaries were checked by ultrasound after her delivery, which established that they were both normal. "But I only have one ovary," she exclaimed, "since they removed one of them during my appendectomy!". The doctor sent for her records and verified that she was correct. They could not explain why she now had two ovaries!

God had recreated more than one organ in this woman's body. She experienced Luke 4:19 literally, where Jesus speaks of a year of Jubilee from the Lord. This refers to the year of Jubilee in the Old Testament, when every fiftieth year the people received back all that they had lost in one way or another to another person, or that had been taken from them. Hallelujah!

The Bible speaks about angels that are here to help us. Most times we do not see them with our physical eyes, but they can appear in different ways, as can be seen in the following testimony.

An angel in cowboy boots

One evening a group of Bible school students I knew in Maine went to help out in a church far from the school. They had no money and that night they received no compensation for their expenses. They did not know if there would be enough petrol in the car to make it back home, and so they decided to take a shortcut through a desolate forest.

They had travelled about 50 km beyond the last house when they ran out of petrol. None of them were dressed for the cold January night, which made the situation life-threatening. The driver got out and started to walk back the way they had come, when all of a sudden he saw some headlights approaching. A small pick-up truck stopped and a man in cowboy boots, hat and jeans got out and asked what the problem was. When it was explained to him he said, "I have gas!" and out of a large two-cubic-metre petrol tank on the back of his truck, he filled up their petrol tank, refusing any payment. "I travel around and help people in trouble," he said, "this area is so desolate." He got in his car and drove away.

The place where their car had stopped was a very long, straight stretch of road, and they should have seen the truck with their helper drive away. But suddenly and inexplicably, it was gone! Angelic help had truly

saved their lives!

In Hebrews 13:2 we see that there are times when angels appear like normal people: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it." We also have promises of angelic protection in Psalm 91:11: "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them".

I too can testify to a petrol miracle from some years back. I was travelling with another lady friend on a large highway in the States when we ran out of petrol. We had just come from a faith-building church meeting and I heard myself say, "Jesus, please fill up the tank so that we can make it to a petrol station!" Suddenly the needle on the gauge started moving and we were able to start the car and drive on. After about 20 km we came to a petrol station and the car started "hiccuping". We rolled the last metres to the petrol pump. God had filled it with the exact amount we needed! Of course we cannot make this a habit, and I have not tried to do so. But He helps us in times of need!

The fish miracle

This happened in Greece, during the summer of 1982. In the book "Is That Really You, Lord?" Loren Cunningham and Janice Rogers write about hearing God's voice. They tell about a group of enthusiastic evangelists from YWAM (Youth With A Mission) who were fasting and praying for a great harvest of souls. But they came to harvest other things as well. They were working on board the ship "Anastasis" which was in the docks for repairs in Athens, Greece.

The following incidents, which were carefully documented, were part of a very unusual and different catch of fish, which gave them a welcome supplement to their otherwise meagre rice diet.

The miracle started when 12 fish, for no reason, jumped out of the water and landed on the beach at the feet of a crew member. A few days later, a large tuna fish jumped on shore, a wonderful experience for the young evangelists. Shortly after this, fish again started jumping. One team member who was on the shore at the time gathered 210 fish, and the local Greeks took a lot more. But the biggest harvest came one morning, when more than a ton of fish jumped up on the sand! The

YWAM team rushed to carry them away in buckets, bags and pans, anything that would hold fish. The locals also ran to take part in the unusual catch, and even the day after, people were still collecting fish from the beach. The local people commented, "God is with these people!"

Just as suddenly as the fish appeared on the beach and symbolised a rich harvest of souls for the Anastasis' aid work, so, too, were the finances released to pay for the repairs of the ship. Money from all over the world suddenly flowed in!

The rice miracle

In the Bible we are told how five thousand men, plus women and children, were fed with five loaves of bread and two fish, and there were even 12 baskets left over. A similar miracle took place in South Korea in February of 1964. The story is found in the book, "The Rice Miracle", published by Koinonia.

There was a great famine in South Korea at the time and many were dying of starvation. Gösta Öhman, a Swedish missionary whom I have met, lived there and bought an 80-kilo bag of rice with the last money he had. He emptied the rice into a wooden box, saying, "Praise God, we have a little food again!" Then he heard a voice say, "Are you going to eat all that rice yourselves while many people around you are dying?" He turned around to see who had spoken to him, but did not see anyone, so he said, "What can we do about the matter?" The answer he received was, "Share!" He tried to explain how impossible it was, but was interrupted when he said the word "impossible". He saw before him a vision of a woman on whose forehead was written, "Share, or die!"

"OK, that must have been your message, Lord, to the widow whom you ordered to provide for Elijah," he reasoned. But the Lord answered him, "Yes, and it's also my word to you now!" So he followed God's instruction to him, in spite of the locals warning him not to start handing out rice. It would mean long queues, and people stampeding to get some provision.

Let us assume that the people only got one (but most got two or three) helpings per week per family. His 80-kilo sack was actually multiplied at least ten times! Just as God increased the little boy's packed

lunch, so He increased the missionary's meagre rice sack to feed 50,000 people for 30 weeks! Our God certainly is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord who provides!

Language miracle in Russia

A young Russian woman lived with us and worked in our church for a year. She has a tremendously fascinating life history. At 22 she had already completed her education as a teacher in both English and German, and began to teach at the university. She did not know anything about God or Christian beliefs, and in spite of her success she decided, "I don't want to just work, get married, have children, and then die — there has to be more to life!"

One night there was a knock at her door. There stood a woman from the local Baptist church, who asked if the young teacher would consider translating for an American preacher holding a campaign the following week. The opportunity sounded like an exciting challenge. The city she lived in had been a military zone for many years, and this was the first time a foreigner had been granted access to the city. She had never met anybody from another country before! The Baptist lady gave her an English and Russian New Testament, and advised her to read them through in preparation for the campaign.

The first evening of the campaign arrived. The Southern accent of the American sounded totally different from British English! Also, he preached mostly from the Old Testament, which she had never read. Everything was strange to her. As if that were not enough, the campaign was broadcast on live television. However, the whole church prayed for the young translator throughout the service, and a miracle happened. The Holy Spirit came upon her and she was able to translate perfectly. While preparing herself prior to the campaign, she had read the New Testament for the first time in her life and had thought, "This must be true!" Now she was convinced. She saw many at the campaign accept Jesus, and on the last evening she herself received Jesus as her personal Saviour.

A month later there was another knock at her door. This time it was a man from a Pentecostal church asking if she could translate during another campaign. Then there was a group of Americans living in St. Petersburg, who travelled around in Russia planting churches. They

asked the recently saved teacher if she would translate their meetings.

Two months after her conversion, she left her job at the university and moved to St. Petersburg. A year later she came to Sweden, sponsored by a small church, to attend an international English-speaking Bible school. There another language miracle took place. During her nine-month stay in Sweden as an English/Russian interpreter at the Bible school, she was able to learn Swedish in her spare time. At the end of the year, she translated from Swedish into Russian. For the next four years she worked at a Bible school with 500 students in Moscow. After that, she returned to Sweden and immediately began preaching in fluent, grammatically correct Swedish, better than many who have lived in Sweden a long time. Recently she translated this book from Swedish into Russian. The young woman had been right. Life does have more to offer than work, marriage, children and death.

The computer miracle

The same woman experienced another remarkable miracle.

In the early 90's she was working at the Bible school in Moscow. At the beginning of the term personal acceptance and information letters needed to be handed out to the students. At the office, our young translator had worked with others for a whole quarter under very Spartan conditions, collecting and entering the information about the students. In the register was also the former students' information, as well as information about others who had not been accepted. Altogether the register contained the names, addresses and personal details of over 2000 students.

It was decided to change the computer programme, which was to be installed the evening before the term started. A computer expert installed the programme, but expressed doubt about the safety of the information, as it was a risky thing to do. His misgivings proved true. All the information disappeared! There was no way to retrieve it and no back-up copies had been made.

The young lady and her colleagues could not accept that months of work had suddenly disappeared. Faith rose up inside them and they prayed. "Lord, you have all the information in heaven. You know all the names, addresses and other details of each one. We call for a miracle. Please install it in the computer!"

God heard their desperate, faith-filled prayer. The next morning all the information was on the computer! The expert was called in, but he said, "There is no human explanation, it's a miracle!"

There is nothing that He cannot do, our mighty, miracle-working God!

The miracle of the brakes

The "school of life" is mainly one of learning from our mistakes, and the lessons are not easily forgotten. It could be about making sure that you have enough petrol in your car before leaving on a trip, having back-up systems for your computer, or making sure you fill up the brake fluid, and that is what I would like to tell you about.

Many years ago someone gave us our first car. Shortly afterwards we planned a lengthy trip through half of the United States. However, high up in the West Virginia mountains the brakes stopped working! We managed to stop the car and asked God for help. The brakes started working again and we drove another two days without any problem, but we did not get the brakes checked.

When we later met a person who knew about cars, he immediately checked the level of the brake fluid. There was nothing left — it was bone dry! The brakes do not work without fluid, he said. This was yet another miracle! God in his mercy does miracles for us, in spite of our mistakes.

The sales miracle

Our family was selling a large mobile home, because we were moving to another state in the USA. According to the prognosis our project was hopeless, as our price was not realistic. In the daily newspaper there were three pages of advertised mobile homes for sale. We were advised to return the key to the company from whom we had purchased it and not leave a forwarding address, but we did not feel that was right.

We prayed, and then placed an advertisement of three lines in the daily paper. That same day we received a reply! A family phoned and asked if we still had the mobile home. They had read all the advertisements but when they came to ours, it seemed to light up, and they knew it was the right one. They lived a five hours' drive from us, so we promised to keep the mobile home for them. As soon as they arrived, the

transaction was completed! It transpired that they were a Christian family, and when they heard that we were going to live in a single room for the last month to save money, they offered to let us continue living in the home until we moved – for free! "We want to give that to you as an offering," they said.

A scientist approached God and said, "Listen, we've decided we no longer need You. Nowadays, we can clone people, transplant hearts and do all kinds of things that were once considered miraculous."

God patiently heard him out, and then said, "All right. To see whether or not you still need Me, why don't we have a man-making contest?"

"Okay, great!" the scientist said.

"Now, we're going to do this just the way I did back in the old days with Adam," God said.

"That's fine," replied the scientist, and bent to scoop up a handful of dirt.

"Whoa!" God said, shaking his head in disapproval. "Not so fast, My friend. You go and get your own dirt!"

Everyday miracles for someone visually impaired

I have now been visually impaired for almost 40 years. My medical record states that I am severely handicapped, having only enough sight to see my way about, not being able to orient myself in unknown places, and having only two percent vision. In spite of this diagnosis, nobody seems to notice. More than 30 years ago the Lord spoke to me very strongly. A woman who did not know me and did not know about my disability, gave me a message from the Lord during a service on the first day of the Bible school in Maine. He said that He would heal my blind eyes. Until then, I was to walk in faith as if I could already see. He would take care of the rest.

A couple of years ago I received an explanation for the miracle I am living, the miracle that no one seems to notice that I cannot see well. A person that works with visually impaired people told me, "I have never before seen a person with impaired vision and the natural body movement of a sighted person! Such a person usually moves in a specific way

because he can't see his surroundings".

The miracle I have lived is that my subconscious and my central nervous system do not seem to realise that I cannot see. For example, my feet always run up stairs, and it is exciting for my head to follow. When somebody hands out printed material, the hands receive it before the head starts to ask what I am going to use it for (because I cannot read it). Automatically I seek eye contact with those with whom I speak, even though I cannot see the head of the person, as my central vision is missing.

My consultant at the hospital has talked to me about breaking down my resistance to using a white cane that was given to me 30 years ago. But as I have not fallen or tripped yet without the cane, I would probably do so with the cane, because of the speed I normally walk! I live in this miracle daily. Almost every day people ask me about it, and that gives me an opportunity to testify to what God is doing.

A couple of days after that prophetic word 30 years ago, concerning acting as if I could see, the big test came. We were about to have gym class at school, and for that semester we were going to play baseball. This is a completely impossible sport for me to play, as I cannot see the ball in time. How then would I manage to hit the ball?

First I thought I would ask to be excused from class, but then I was reminded of the prophetic word. The Lord also gave me Philippians 4:13: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Now I just had to test this! All the other players had grown up playing baseball, but for me it was a new game. At last it was my turn to take the bat and I said a prayer, "Lord Jesus, help me hit the ball!". Then I started swinging the bat around, the ball came flying through the air – and I hit it! Unfortunately the ball landed on first base and I was out. The next inning, I asked for a good hit!

I continued to play the whole season and had good hits throughout. I would be able to run to either second or even third base before they got the ball. They said that I played better than most of the other team members. Every gym class became a miracle. Imagine — God cares about ball games!

After 30 years it was time to try again. Our church was playing an equivalent of baseball and I had not thought about participating. How-

ever, because there were small children playing too, I thought that maybe I should give it a try. Imagine — it still worked! I made four home runs! Life with Jesus is very exciting and a lot of fun!

Impossible? For God everything is possible!

The bowling miracle

I would like to tell you about the first time I went bowling. It was many years ago, together with some friends. I had told them how I "cheat" in life with various things that are impossible for me to do — and that is by praying! I presume the Lord thought that even this time it would be a wonderful opportunity for Him to show His power.

The person with whom I was bowling competed on the university bowling team, and he had many trophies from these competitions. Now we were going to bowl, and I could not even see the pins!

The amazing thing that happened was that I was in first place until the last frame, and managed to get 225 points. Apparently it looked professional to the bowling manager and he came over to us, asking if we would like to represent the house in the upcoming competitions! It was fun to let him know that I was nearly blind, that I had never bowled before and that I could not even see the bowling pins.

I have more stories of this nature, with darts, mini-golf and billiards, and they have become mighty testimonies of God's ability to help me. Once I preached at a venue where they had a billiard table, and after the preaching some men were playing. I asked if I could try. The balls did not go down in numerical order, but the whole table was cleared without any misses. This you cannot do on request, but sometimes God takes over the game. Actually, I am convinced that angels help me, and I think they must have a lot of fun playing ball instead of always saving people from accidents!

What I have shared here about sports and games is not of great importance in itself, but it has shown me God's humour and care in all situations. After the season of baseball, it was not hard to trust God when Michael was born with hydrocephalus. Surely this must be far more important for God than a ball? If God is so interested in and man-

ages to handle baseball, bowling and billiards, and if He can feed 50,000 people for 30 weeks with 80 kilos of rice; if He can get a ton of fish to jump up on a beach; if He can put back missing information in a computer; if He can give a person new organs; if He can fill up your car with petrol — don't you think He could manage you, too? You and your soul are so much more important than all the games in the world!

During a solemn moment in a packed church, something totally unexpected happened. The pastor started laughing uncontrollably, doubled over and could not stop. The choir was called up to sing a song, but it did not give him enough time to recover. They sang another song, but in the end they had to close the meeting.

It was only the pastor who had seen the incident. An elderly man was sitting in the front row of the balcony seats. It was warm inside and he had dozed off. His head rolled from one side to the other, and then fell forwards. Then it happened! The man's toupee came loose and fell over the rail into the lap of a very blessed lady sitting with her eyes closed praising the Lord. She recovered very quickly. In front of her sat a bald man, so she hurriedly stuffed the wig on his head. Now it was his turn to praise the Lord! He had been praying for more hair for many years and now he had received his answer during the service!

 *"For nothing is impossible with God."* Luke 1:37

Chapter 5

Symptoms and causes

After a few years of experience, the following illustration was given to me and some fellow counsellors from our church. A person can be seen as a tree. The upper part of the tree symbolises the public part of our lives, what we feel and experience that other people see, and the way we interact with them. The root system of the tree is the unseen part of our lives. The roots consist of experiences we have gone through in life. Some of the roots are damaged and defective and nourish the negative emotions and behaviour patterns in which we are caught. These emotions and habit patterns are symptoms or manifestations that do not change just because we talk about them, although our situation can be temporarily lightened by talking. Real, lasting change takes place only when we deal with the roots, or the causes of our problems.

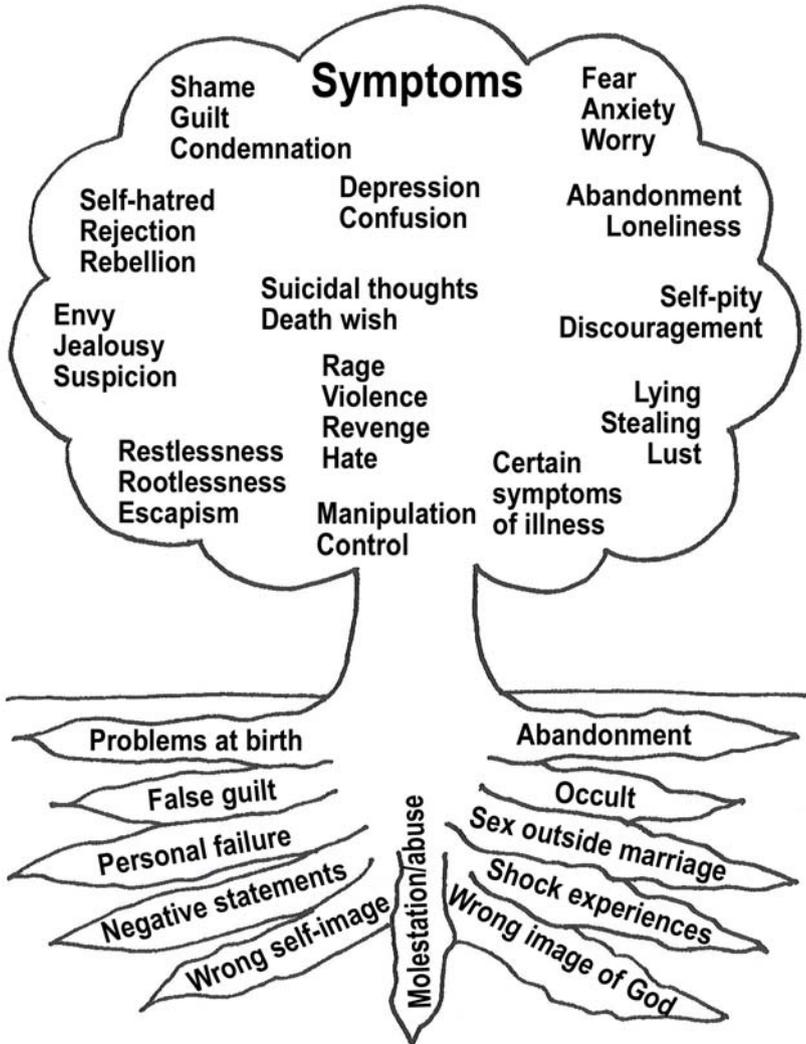
This is foundational knowledge in psychotherapy. During a three-day conference I taught about a person's restoration with this illustration as an example. After the last session a lady came to me and said, "I am a psychotherapist and have listened to your whole teaching. We work the same way, but it can take years of counselling to find the roots. God can obviously reveal them in a few minutes".

Yes, that is often the case, especially when you receive knowledge from God about which types of situations in life cause problems. Most important, though, is to know that whether the realisation comes through therapy, through reading, or through revelation knowledge, this is just the beginning. Then God can take the next step. We do not only get revelation of what we are like because of experiences we have had, and then go no further. Neither do we just have to learn to "live with the symptoms", as some therapies suggest.

I once heard about a psychotherapist who became a Christian in the USA. I do not remember her name, but she was an alcoholic and had many problems when she was saved at the age of 45. Through prayer she was helped to walk in freedom. Later she herself started helping people through prayer counselling, and eventually wrote a book telling how, while psychotherapy teaches a person how to live with his old

nature, Jesus helps us to take on and live out our new nature. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!".

We do not despise the help and co-operation of psychologists, psychotherapists and psychiatrists, but the biggest change takes place through God's transforming power, which is available through forgiveness and reconciliation.



Roots that give nourishment to negative symptoms

Your basic attitude to problems

The advice is often given that we are to live with, or become friends with, our problem. And in many situations this is as far as we can go, without God's transforming power. However, a real friend would not try to control or drive you, whereas sin, fear, anxiety and phobias certainly control many people's lives. Your basic attitude needs to be that these types of problems are your enemies and you want to get rid of them. Jesus can and wants to help you! Do not align yourself with the enemy, but fight the good fight of faith!

A pastor said to a man standing at the liquor store with a bottle of brandy in his hand, "This is your enemy!" "Yes, yes", replied the drunk man, "but it says in the Bible that we should love our enemies". We need to understand the difference between friends and enemies and how we should love them!

An Old Testament story tells us of an interesting way to view our problems. In 2 Samuel 5:6 we see how King David conquered the Jebusites in Jerusalem. They tried to stop King David from entering by saying, "You will not come here. The blind and the cripple will drive you away!" They were hoping that these poor people would dissuade King David. Jerusalem is a picture of our hearts, and King Jesus is the person who wants to conquer our hearts and become Lord in our lives. Sometimes we try to use our weaknesses and problems as a defence, but we need to understand a weakness should be neither a friend nor a defence. Nothing should stop King Jesus from winning our hearts!

Another important foundational attitude is truly wanting to be free — through our problems we can receive a certain amount of attention and some benefits. To speak about our problems and seek help does not necessarily mean we want to get rid of them. Jesus asked a man who had been paralysed for 38 years, "Do you want to be well?" (John 5:6), and this is the same question He is asking you.

Our goal

Our goal is to be changed more and more to look like "the good tree", called "God's plan for man". The upper part of the tree is full of the fruit

of the Spirit, which speaks of our character: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a). These grow because we are rooted in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7 says, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness".

God's plan for man



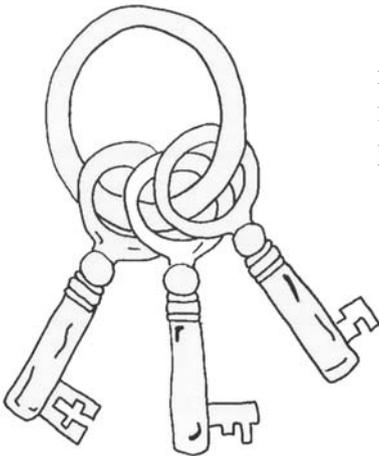
The roots receive their nourishment from the Bible, prayer, Holy Communion and fellowship with other believers. These are sometimes called the "four pillars" of the Christian faith and are found in Acts 2:42.

The Holy Spirit is the sap in the tree, which transports the nourishment from the roots to the branches. Ephesians 5:18 says, "Instead, be filled with the Spirit . . .". This whole process of change from the negative tree to the good tree is what the Bible calls "sanctification". More about this subject later.

How it happens

This change is not caused by some technique, but by the power of the cross. Jesus has made the change possible through His death 2000 years ago. He does not force anything on us. With your free will, you have the key, and it is called repentance and reconciliation. Our restoration and healing from difficult circumstances take place when we choose repentance and reconciliation at various levels. By this I mean that we need to be reconciled with God, ourselves and others.

Our soul cannot always understand how much good we receive through

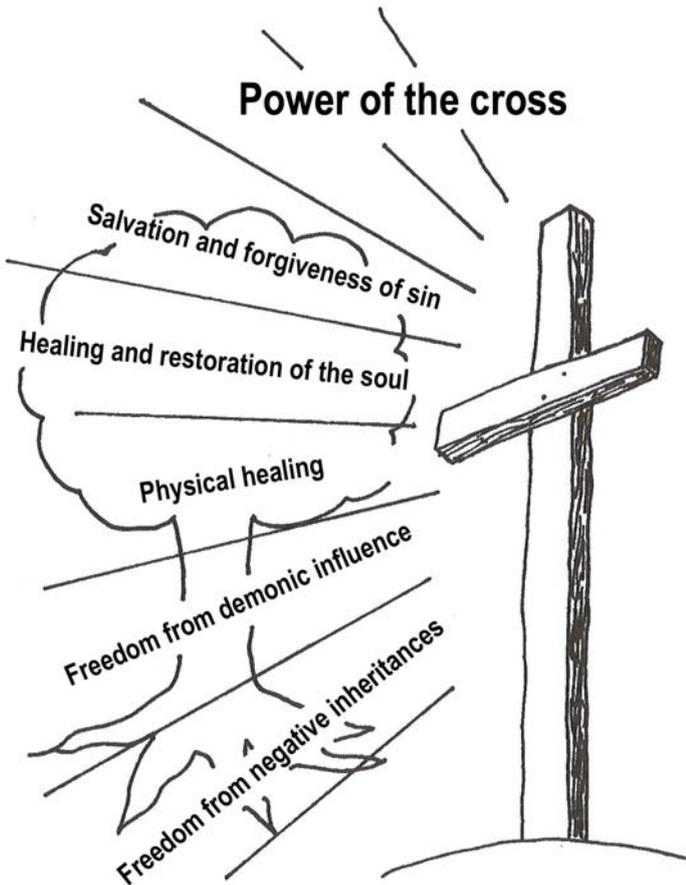


“...Do not merely desire peaceful relations [with God, with your fellowmen, and with yourself], but pursue, go after them!”

1 Pet. 3:11b The Amplified Bible

These areas are keys to our own well-being and to releasing the power of the cross in our lives.

salvation, and what we can be set free from, thanks to Jesus' complete work of love on the cross. The Holy Spirit needs to reveal these things to us. First Peter 2:24-25 says: "He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." Many Christians struggle unnecessarily in their own strength all their



As the negative roots of your life pass through repentance and reconciliation, the power of the cross is released to bring healing, deliverance and restoration. Repentance means turning from sin and turning towards God.

lives against bondages of different kinds, but in Jesus there is freedom!

The purpose of this book is to portray Jesus as the Counsellor. I want to tell you how you can meet Him and receive help for specific problems. I am presenting a way to help yourself where other people are not necessarily involved; you and Jesus are the focus.

But first let me tell you a story. The power of the cross can be very real in our lives if we allow it. See how it affected this boy's life!

A young boy growing up in an atheistic home knew nothing whatsoever about Jesus, the cross or religion. He was not doing too well in Maths at the school he was attending, and his father threatened to send him to the local convent school if his marks did not improve. It was reported that the convent school had a very good Maths department with matching results in the students' marks. And that is what eventually happened. The poor fellow was sent off to the convent school at the beginning of the next term. At the end of that term, he came home with a magnificent change in his Maths results. The father was suitably impressed with his son and the programme, and asked him what had brought about the change. The son replied, "On the first day of school I realised that they meant business with Maths at this school. At the end of the hallway they had nailed up a guy on a plus sign."

Jesus' mandate

Jesus explained His mandate at the beginning of His ministry when He read aloud, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19).

Here is everything you could ever think you need: salvation, deliverance, healing, victory over circumstances and the winning back of what has been stolen from you. Our part is to take up the challenge. In Acts 10:38, Peter spoke of Jesus' ministry, "...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around

doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him". This should not leave any doubt as to what the will of God is! Second Corinthians 10:3-5 says: "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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."

Verse four speaks about demolishing strongholds. These can be in our social circle, city or country, but we are going to focus here on things that are on the personal level. These strongholds I interpret as areas in our lives where the enemy has a right to torment us. Therefore, these need to be exposed and broken down. When we, through repentance and confession of our sin, deal with whatever gives the enemy this right, it becomes easy to get free. Without this there is no true freedom. Being set free from various oppressions goes hand in hand with the healing of the soul. We need to gain victory area by area, just as the children of Israel took the Promised Land. We read in Exodus 23:29-30, "But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land".

If you have needs in your life

The testimonies and teaching in this book can give you hope and faith for the things over which you are struggling, or can be of help to someone you know. My prayer is that you will have a revelation of God's love and care for you. If the Holy Spirit shows you an area or situation with which you need to deal, here is some good advice: Have paper and a pen at hand to write down what touches you and your situation while you are reading. Then when you have finished the book, you can deal with what you have written down on your list.

Personal experience has taught me that if I receive a word of knowledge — the gift of the Holy Spirit which is a word from God about someone else's situation — I need to write it down or speak it out as soon as possible. Such words occupy my mind until I have done some-

thing about them, and then I can concentrate on something else.

What you can do

If unconfessed sin comes to your attention, waste no time in confessing the sin before God and asking for forgiveness. Maybe the Lord has spoken to you about it before. He can even speak through dreams. When you have asked for forgiveness, you should thank Him straight away for being forgiven!

If it concerns someone you need to forgive, it can be a process that works on different levels. I am trusting that the Holy Spirit will give you the insight you need to receive now. He does not highlight all areas at the same time, as we would not be able to handle it. Write down the situation the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention, and give it to God.

Your prayer while reading this book could be: "Lord, I want to be healed or set free from.... You know me, so please do it in Your time and in Your way. I commit myself to You, in Jesus' name." This way it can be exciting and constructive to read the book, instead of being an emotionally difficult time.

It is safe to be completely honest with God. Concerning difficult things like abuse, abandonment or molestation, you might need to say: "I find it difficult to forgive, what happened is so deep — I need a miracle to be able to forgive! God, help me! I need your love!" Some things that happen can sit so deep in the body and soul that it seems impossible to forgive. God knows about that too, and He has a way out for you. You can read more about this later in the book.

If some part of the book is too sensitive or difficult to read now, I suggest you skip that part for the time being and come back to it later.

One day a woman shared a simple truth that the Lord had told her. I was deeply touched by it and asked someone to make a plaque for me depicting the words. Write them down and remind yourself of the following:

You and I have to co-operate.

I need your willingness

and you need my abilities.

— *Jesus*

Bible promises of help from the Lord

A Scripture verse that emphasises where our help comes from is 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it." When you allow God, He does the work!

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light". The Living Bible says it like this: "Come to me and I will give you rest – all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke – for it fits perfectly – and let me teach you; for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls; for I give you only light burdens." The Amplified Bible says: "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest. [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.]"

Isaiah 40:29-31 tells us this: "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Jeremiah 31:25 says, "I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint".

Allow me to quote some further Scripture passages, which concern the restoration of Israel but can also apply to our lives. The focus is on where Israel's help comes from.

Jeremiah 31:9a: "They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble"

In Moses' farewell song we read the wonderful verses that can also describe the spiritual process of walking in freedom. Deuteronomy 32:10-12: "In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. The Lord alone

led him; no foreign god was with him. He made him ride on the heights of the land and fed him with the fruit of the fields. He nourished him with honey from the rock, and with oil from the flinty crag."

It is said that the pilgrimage from Egypt to the Promised Land could have been done in 11 days, but because of the children of Israel's disobedience, the time they spent in the desert was 40 years. In fact, they were not the ones to enter the Promised Land, but it was the next generation. Do you want to enter a life of freedom?

Psalm 146 has a title in the NASV, "The Lord an Abundant Helper". Read the whole Psalm. Verse 7b-9: "...the Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down... and sustains the fatherless and the widow...."

A devotional book called "These Scriptures Have Helped Me", compiled by Salvation Army Officers from Sweden and Finland, presents their favourite Scripture verses day by day. One which keeps recurring is Isaiah 45:2-3: "I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name."

The purpose of the book you are now reading is to demonstrate how you can take hold of your Promised Land, or in other words, how you can live in the daily reality of the 23rd Psalm. These words can become a reality for you!

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

*You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

An anchor for the soul

Do you need an anchor for your soul as you are tossed to and fro in the storms of life? The Bible refers to the anchor of the soul in Hebrews 6:18-19b, a chapter that speaks of the promises of God. "...[W]e who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain . . ."

Jesus has opened the way for us, so that we can go beyond the veil into God's presence. The most stable thing in life is the reality of God's promises in the Bible.

The Ten Commandments

In the Ten Commandments God gave us foundational ethics and laws inherent in His creation, which are just as valid today as they were during Old Testament times. However, you will not get to heaven by living according to the Commandments, because God does not only look at our actions but also at our thoughts, words and motives. None of us are faultless and therefore we can only be saved and made righteous by the grace and forgiveness that God offers us through Christ Jesus.

Yet, the Commandments serve as a guiding principle for our lives and do not lead to bondage but freedom. To live according to God's commands is a protection. There are negative consequences if we do not live according to His commandments in any area of our lives. These are the commandments found in Exodus 20:3-17:

Your relationship to God

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
3. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Your relationship to man

4. Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
5. You shall not murder.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's house.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Terminology

If you are well versed in the Word of God and familiar with Biblical expressions, you can probably confirm that the theme of this book is not new. It is repentance and sanctification, although different groups or denominations may use different terminology.

Another Biblical expression for what we are speaking about is "dying to self". Galatians 2:20 says: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Romans 12:1-2 speaks about renewing the mind: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God –this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed [Greek – *metamorphus*] by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." *Metamorphus* is the same word used when referring to the change that a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. The transformed butterfly then flies out in freedom and is beautiful to look at.

We can also talk about a life of victory. Romans 8:37 says, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us". The Amplified version of the Bible expresses our victory this way: "... we are more than conquerors *and* gain a surpassing victory".

We may be used to expressing some things in a certain way and feel insecure when we hear it expressed in another way. We might feel offended or think another expression is wrong. I want to compare the situation to the difference between spaghetti and macaroni. You can also get rotini, rigate, vitine or fusilli. The shapes are different, but the dough is the same.

Personally, I have all God's people on my heart. I preach in all Christian contexts, from the Lutheran Church to the so-named "Faith Movement". In the States I preached in Roman Catholic churches and worked with some convents. Our church has had a Discipleship School in the mornings and some of our city's pastors have visited and spoken about their own churches. A wonderful Roman Catholic sister visited us too, and commented on the fact that we had more in common than we knew. If we can only see past our ways of expression, we have a lot in common. There are devoted Christians everywhere. There are also legalistic, religious Christians, just as you discover worldly Christians, in all denominations. You might prefer spaghetti in long strings that you can turn around a fork. But vitine are not so bad either, even if they might be more difficult to get on a fork. As I said, the content is the same.

"God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts."

Testimonies

In the following chapters, you will read many stories about different people and how they received help in specific areas. You probably understand that we cannot give all the details, or say how long it took for each to be free. When it comes to healing of the soul, I wait at least a couple of months to see if the person notices any difference. Almost all the people we write about have been free in the specific area of which they have testified for a number of years.

However, just because you have gained freedom in one area does not mean you are completely restored in every area of your life. You have to keep working on "taking the land". May God bless us all in this process!

In the next chapters we will also discuss the four foundational areas of reconciliation that are needed to release the power of the cross for healing, freedom and restoration. Then we will look at the different roots.

🔑 *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."*

1 Peter 2:24-25

Chapter 6

Forgiveness

I am reminded of the story of the boy who left his Christian home in the country and went to the capital city. He soon got caught up in prostitution and drugs. He sold opium and became a central figure in that country's sex industry. After some time things started going badly for him. He then remembered his father's words of farewell as he left home: "I'll be waiting for you!" He wrote a letter to his father, asking if he was still waiting for him. "If you forgive me for everything I have done", the young man wrote, "please hang a white cloth in the tree at the bend in the road right before the train station. If there's no white cloth in the tree, I will continue on the train and we'll never see each other again."

The day came when he was on his way home. The young man was nervous so a fellow passenger who had heard of the situation looked out the window for him. He shouted, "The whole tree is full of white cloths!" Standing by the tree was the father waving and jumping for joy. The son was forgiven!

This is also God's greeting to you and me when we come to Him and confess our sins. He does not measure our sins or decide that they are too big. John 6:37b says, "...and whoever comes to me I will never drive away".

Forgiveness – the foundation for salvation

In the third chapter of this book, we looked at the fact that when we each receive Jesus, confess that we are sinners and receive forgiveness, we are saved. The biggest sin is when we walk our own way in pride and want nothing to do with Jesus. Isaiah 53:6 says, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way...".

A person's sin is simply a consequence of being a sinner. Romans 3:23 says, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". That is why it is not enough to put aside certain sinful symptoms, such as drinking or using foul language. In salvation, we are first and foremost forgiven for being a sinner, and also for all of the symptoms. We become righteous!

As a fifteen-year-old at an Easter camp, I was given an unforgettable explanation of the word "righteousness" and the phrase "cleansed by the blood of Jesus". The Bible study leader read a couple of Scripture verses — Isaiah 1:18b, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool", and Revelation 7:14b, "... they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". How can we, with "blood-red sins", be washed in the blood of Jesus and become white? For the human mind this is incomprehensible. The theme for the Easter camp was "Golgotha covers my sin". They had hung these theme words up on a sign right at the front of the church and it glowed with big red letters against the white wall. The leader held up a red piece of glass and explained that when you look at something red through red glass it becomes white. The piece of glass was sent around and everybody could testify to this phenomenon. The wall looked red but the letters were white. Since then I have often used a red piece of glass to define righteousness in my own work among youth.

When you are saved, God looks at you through the blood of Jesus, and you are pure and clean. Isaiah 61:10b says, "For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness". Hallelujah! To be saved you do not have to remember and confess every sin you have ever committed – which, by the way, would be impossible!

One of the thieves on the cross next to Jesus said to Him, "Remember me when you get to heaven". Jesus assured him, "Today you will be with me in paradise". So, it is neither specific sin confession nor changing your lifestyle and starting to do good deeds that saves you. It is your relationship with Jesus. When you are in Him you are righteous. In Him you have a right standing before a holy God who does not tolerate sin. This is the greatest and most important miracle that can ever happen in our lives!

We have a lot of testimonies of older unsaved people who have prayed the Lord's Prayer with somebody at the end of their lives. When they, with all their hearts, have prayed "Forgive us our sins", they have experienced a radical salvation where God's peace met them in a tangible way.

A friend told me about a school that she had attended when she was

young. She had often spoken to her dean about God, but he had had numerous arguments ready, as many of his relatives were priests. However, when he was 80 years old, he found himself full of self-reproach and anxiety. He then requested his former student to visit, along with another Christian friend who had been talking to him recently about God. When the visitors asked him if he had invited them because he wanted to be saved, his answer was "Yes". They suggested that they pray the Lord's Prayer together. After the final "Amen", he said, "Now it's done. Now I have peace". He lived a couple of years as a Christian before he went to be with the Lord.

This same friend has led people to Christ using the Lord's Prayer many times, and in most cases the individuals were elderly. A 95-year-old man testified that he saw angels fill the room after praying the Lord's Prayer with his grandchild. A 90-year-old man found peace, was freed of bitterness and stopped cursing in the last two weeks of his life. He was so transformed that his unsaved family wondered what had happened. A couple of years later the answer came when a Christian nurse told them how she had prayed with the man when he was full of anxiety about dying. Do not let yourself be deceived into believing that it is too hard to pray for salvation with somebody. It does not depend on your words but on the individual's willingness to surrender to Jesus and receive Him.

I have deliberately spent time on this topic of the immediate sanctification we receive, where God sees us as holy even though no man sees it yet. It comes from our position in Christ. Ephesians 1:7a says, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins..."

God always looks at the heart and not at the outer man. Jesus explains this in Luke 18:9-14. "To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified

before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'"

Healed of AIDS

I recently met a man who had an amazing testimony. Eight years previously he was dying of AIDS. Early in life things had started going wrong for him. He grew up in a dysfunctional family, began using drugs and alcohol, later went on to hashish and became involved in crime. In 1985 he became a Christian, but fell back into substance abuse. During 1989 he was infected with HIV and in 1993 it progressed to AIDS. Three years later, the lifestyle he had lived and the disease he had were taking their toll on his body. The doctors gave up, and gave him only a few months to live.

Soon after this he was walking past one of the big churches in Stockholm when he felt the conviction of his need to turn back to Jesus. He spoke to one of the deaconesses, and during the autumn of 1996 he was admitted to a Christian rehabilitation centre, where he would be able to die with dignity.

One day he sensed clearly that God was telling him to deal with his conscience. He read 1 John 1:9, which says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness", and thought that nothing could be more unrighteous than to die of AIDS. So he began to clean up his life, even though it was very painful. It took several hours for him to confess all his drug and sex abuse to a counsellor. Over the next few months he wrote down every sin he could think of from his "old" life. Later he read it all out in the presence of a counsellor, received forgiveness through Jesus, and found complete peace.

A miracle then started taking place and the progress of the disease came to a halt. The man's immunity increased from six percent to the normal value of 60 percent. No virus has been found in his blood for the past five years. The transformation is complete! He himself stresses the importance of dealing with your past – total surrender is the key so that you do not fall back into the old lifestyle.

Forgiveness is the foundation for restoration, freedom, healing and anointing for ministry

My pastor used to talk about his father, who had been an officer in the Salvation Army. In those days, he said, when people wanted to become Christians, they prayed for hours until they "came through", as they called it. My own experience from various crusades 30 or 40 years ago is that people were on their knees for long periods, crying and praying. This can probably be explained in part by the fact that the overall fear of God was greater in Sweden at that time. The salvation prayer we pray when we surrender to God from our heart is enough to get us to heaven, but some specific confessions of sin and prayers of deliverance need to be prayed in order for the old life to lose its power over a person.

In more recent years, it has not been as common as it used to be that a strong conviction of sin has caused people to come to Jesus. Neither has the same foundation of Christian teaching and knowledge of the Ten Commandments existed among people. What has brought people to Jesus has often been a longing to fill a void in their soul and find a meaning to life. They have heard testimonies that Jesus gives meaning to life. When God's power manifests itself with signs and wonders, it may convince people, causing them to surrender to Jesus, but they may not really experience conviction of sin at that time. However, sooner or later conviction, or sorrow, over sin must come in order for the old life to lose its hold on the soul.

There are two kinds of holiness. The first one takes place at salvation, which perhaps only God sees, and the second one is ongoing and lasts a lifetime. The latter is what those around you will notice. Our goal is to become more like Jesus, become "Christ's letters, read by everyone", as the Bible says, and be filled with the fruit of the Spirit. This is where confession of sin and brokenness come in, and where you find help for all you need. Hebrews 4:16: "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

A man who comes off the street and is saved is not as responsible before God in terms of thinking right thoughts and having the right feelings as is a person who has been a Christian for 40 years. For example,

the new Christian can sometimes be very occupied with trying not to drink, steal, curse and assault people. Those kinds of things are not even a temptation for someone who has been a Christian for a long time. They have left the visible, really bad sins. But sanctification continues on a deeper level. That is why we cannot tell others which sins they should deal with.

We had a comical moment in one of our services at church. The meeting concluded with the pastor calling the newly saved to the front. He then asked one of them, a young beer salesman, to close in prayer. He was very zealous and with passion he prayed, "God I give you my whole life, 100%. You can do whatever the —— you want with it!" The pastor quickly pulled himself together and added, "We thank you God that you will finally take care of all the ——." The young man continued to grow and has since attended a Bible school.

I was with our pastor and a team that was teaching at a Bible school in Southeast Asia. Many of the 35 students had a motley background. Besides Buddhism there was past involvement in prostitution, drugs, stealing and a variety of other things. During the teaching on forgiveness, it was explained how important it is to confess your sins, not only before God, but also to bring certain sins into the light before others so they lose their power. In God's eyes they are forgiven at the same time as the sinner confesses the sin and repents of it, but the enemy still has a hook in the soul.

We have an enemy that wants to steal from our lives. In John 10:10a Jesus says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy". The enemy loves to condemn people, and one of his smarter tricks is to remind us of past sins, often when we are about to share our faith, testify or preach. He accuses, "If they knew what you did back then, they wouldn't listen to you now". Many people then lose their boldness. However, if you have shared the sin at some point with someone and prayed together, you can remember that moment and with complete authority, tell the enemy, "Don't put that on me, that's gone!"

At this Bible school we taught through interpreters who were fairly new Christians. We prayed for a miracle. I said to the students, "Now you need to bring out all your rubbish into the light so that it loses its power to bring condemnation". All the women came to me, and all the

men went to the pastor. We prayed that the Holy Spirit would interpret their Thai to us when we prayed, so that no translator had to know anything, and they could be set free. At the same time, they had to forgive themselves for what they had done and leave it behind. It was a very powerful time of prayer as the students lined up to confess their sins and receive understanding of the words in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

During the last session, which was also the last day of the semester, we taught on healing and demonstrated by praying for the sick. The students were told to pray for each other and tangible healings took place. They then went out amongst the mountain tribes to preach the gospel. A couple of weeks later, it was reported, "We have never before seen God's power so strongly manifested as we have through these students, and many people have been healed!"

One important step in receiving more of God's power and anointing in your life is to deal with your past. Anointing is a supernatural expression of God's life flowing through a person in order to help others.

The evangelist that fell into sin

God demonstrated his heart for people in a very tangible way during a service I was leading in the United States. An itinerant evangelist was to preach. At the end of the service, I sensed the Lord strongly urging me to say, "Somebody here needs to confess sin, as you have fallen and need to confess in order to be raised up again". Afterwards the evangelist wanted to have a word with me. The previous week an attractive woman had managed to seduce him. He was devastated and was about to leave the ministry. He said, "This is the last time I'll preach, as I couldn't cancel it". Now, however, he brought everything into the light and asked God for forgiveness. It was a broken but very thankful man that went home that evening. He also confessed to his wife, they were completely restored, and he was able to continue in ministry.

David and Bathsheba

It was the heart of God that reached out to that evangelist, just as it had to King David when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. Psalm 32:3-5 describes what that time was like for David: "When I kept silent,

my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD" – and you forgave the guilt of my sin."

Unconfessed sin makes the soul sick, but there are few occasions as wonderful as simply repenting and being forgiven. This is how King David expresses it in verses 1-2 of the same psalm: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit." The joy that came over King David was the result of a deep brokenness over and repentance of sin. When he was confronted with his sin he did not respond with any arguments, explanations or excuses! And he did not blame anyone else. Nor did he offer a quick, 30-second prayer for God's forgiveness. In King David we see what 2 Corinthians 7:10 speaks of: "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

Some, when their sin is discovered and they are confronted with it, are solely interested in being restored before other people. They do not really think of the heart of God, but only of such things as their own reputation, or what will happen to their ministry. That is sorrow according to the ways of the world and it leads to death. King Saul and the traitor Judas are examples of worldly sorrow. With your mouth you can confess that you have sinned and ask for forgiveness. You can shed tears, and yet it can all be superficial, only focusing on yourself. Sorrow according to God's will focuses on the heart of God and seeks to guard the relationship with Him. The Bible calls this attitude brokenness and the fear of God.

Paul wrote the Corinthian letters to Christians. In the first letter he rebuked, corrected and dealt with major sin. In 2 Corinthians 7, he speaks of them being sorrowful after his first letter was sent, but that it led to repentance. Second Corinthians 7:10 says,

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation...". Deep, honest regret over sin, a sorrow according to the will of God, leads to conversion and a change of heart. It leads to salvation, healing and freedom. When we thoroughly deal with sin instead of excusing ourselves, blaming others or comparing ourselves to others who are worse, free-

dom comes. Repentance is the key in releasing the power of the cross for transformation. Dealing thoroughly with sin in our lives is more important than who lays hands on us to be healed and delivered.

Proverbs 28:13 brings both a warning and a promise: "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." James 5:16 says, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective". The more explicit your confession of sin the more specifically you can receive God's grace for restoration. I believe that you can enter heaven with a general confession of sin, such as, "Forgive me for everything I've done wrong", but there will not be a whole lot of restoration for your soul from that kind of prayer, making it easy to fall back into your old way of life. A preacher once said, "You will never be 100 percent sanctified here on earth. The question is whether you see your sin as a work of art or a toothache". What relationship do you have with sin? Either it is something you devote yourself to, or it is something you suffer from and would do anything to get rid of.

Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land". This Scripture verse can also be applied to our individual lives.

How can conscious, unconfessed sin affect your life?

First and foremost, I want to explain what conscious sin is. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin in our lives, but this conviction does not come all at once, and we are only responsible for the revelation we have. First Peter 1:22a says, "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth...". The truths that have been revealed to you are those for which you are responsible. The expression, "to bring things into the light", is not only a Christian phrase, but is also used in some psychology books. They state that, in order to experience change, you must bring the problem into the light and talk about it, not just think about it. Imagine the change that can take place when you accept responsibility, humble yourself and confess your sin!

Disobedience can result in:

- **Depression.** It can, of course, also be caused by other factors, but David was depressed before he confessed his sin with Bathsheba. See again Psalm 32:3-5.
- **Noticing the sin of others** – and you really want to point it out. These are things you would never have noticed before. It is similar to when you are on crutches you will notice others that are also using crutches. You may even see your own sin in others when it is not there! You become hard and judgmental towards others.
- **Sweeping your sin under the rug.** It will however, show up later in life and cause problems. We will devote more time to this topic in chapter 21.
- **Condemnation.** Shame, guilt and self-hatred can also torment you.

"Everything is under the blood"

In some Christian circles, the expression "everything is under the blood" is used to explain that you should not delve into anything from the past. If you tell someone to confess sin in a certain area of life, you might hear the following prayer: "Thank you, dear God, that I'm already forgiven and I don't even have to mention what I did because it's already under the blood."

It is true that, as a saved person, you are in Christ and will go to heaven in spite of your wrongdoings. However, there will not be much restoration without sorrow over specific sin, confession and repentance. It is not for God's sake, but for your own.

Two little boys aged five and seven years were being raised by a single mother. She found it difficult to handle their mischievous ways and asked the pastor of the church that she attended to give them some fatherly advice and guidance. The pastor wanted the boys to be aware that God saw all the mischief they were getting up to, and he hoped that by knowing this, it would serve as a deterrent.

He duly made an appointment to see them in his office. They arrived, a bit subdued, wondering what all this was about. Sitting in the office waiting for the pastor to arrive, the tension mounted, and possibly a sense of guilt. Finally the pastor walked in and, with the intention of

teaching the boys that God is everywhere, asked in a stern voice, "Where is God?" The boys looked at him, and then at each other. Adding a bit more authority to his voice, the pastor asked again, "Where is God?".

The older boy waited no longer, but grabbed his little brother's hand and raced out of the office, not stopping until they had gone a fair distance. Hiding behind a building, and panting for breath, the younger brother asked, "What's the matter? What's happened?" To this the older brother replied, "Don't you understand? They've lost God and they think we took Him!".

The Touch of the Master's Hand

*"T'was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
thought it scarcely worth his while
to waste much time on the old violin,
but he held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,
"Who'll start bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar — now who'll make it two —
two dollars, and who'll make it three?
Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
going for three" . . . but no!
From the room far back a grey-haired man
came forward and picked up the bow;
then wiping the dust from the old violin,
and tightening up the strings,
he played a melody, pure and sweet,
as sweet as an angel sings.
The music ceased and the auctioneer,
with a voice that was quiet and low,
said: "What am I bidden for the old violin?"
and he held it up with the bow;
"A thousand dollars — and who'll make it two?
Two thousand — and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once, three thousand twice
and going — and gone," said he.*

*The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand —
what changed its worth?" The man replied:
"The touch of the master's hand."
And many a man with life out of tune,
and battered and torn with sin,
is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd,
much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
a game and he travels on,
he's going once, and going twice —
he's going — and almost gone!
But the MASTER comes, and the foolish crowd
never can quite understand,
the worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought
by the touch of the MASTER'S hand.
— Myra B. Welch*

 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9*

Chapter 7

Reconciled to yourself

When we are forgiven and cleansed, we need to do what Paul did – he who had persecuted the Christians and had several people’s blood on his conscience. In Philippians 3:13-15 he writes, "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you."

Grief, condemnation, shame and guilt from past failures affect the body and soul, breaking them down. We have seen, in speaking to numerous people, how the failure to forgive yourself causes endless problems, both physically and mentally. God knows it and wants us to deal with this issue. Do not sweep it under the rug and do not repress it, but forgive yourself and leave it behind you.

You may have a longing to win people for God, but the enemy constantly reminds you of the wretched life you once lived, and all your past failures. Perhaps you think that God will have to use someone else who is better than you are. Expose the enemy and leave the old things behind! Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to you that the past is truly over. Then as a Christian you will be released from prison!

Isaiah 43:18-19 speaks these words of release: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." This is possible when the past is dealt with.

A fatal accident in South America

A woman doctor from another town had made an appointment to see me. She was very tired and had taken a week off to rest. Doctors know what it means to be stressed, with long days of working as well as caring for a family, so they have many reasons to feel tired.

The woman was unknown to me, but before she arrived I asked the Lord to give me keys to her situation. I saw a picture of tall pine trees

and a crooked road. I also saw the words, "death" and "funeral". I drew a simple picture on a piece of paper with the words written on the back. After we had greeted each other and prayed, I showed her the picture and asked what had happened in that place. The same Holy Spirit that had given me the picture interpreted the simple drawing for her. "That is South America," she burst out; "I would never have spoken about this unless the Lord had brought it up!"

Soon after the woman had graduated from medical school she had travelled to South America to do some mission work for three months. One day, she and several others were driving in a pick-up truck. The woman had been sitting in the cab, where she had been telling some funny stories. The driver laughed and missed a curve in the road. The truck ran off the road into a ditch. A Swedish missionary sitting on the back of the truck fell off and broke her leg.

The young doctor soon recognised that the break had caused the woman's body to go into shock and that her condition needed immediate attention. Unfortunately they were without resources, but they did manage to get to a hospital. Nobody there would listen to the young, blonde woman who was trying to tell them how to treat the break, and the missionary died! She was buried the following day. The others at the mission station were preoccupied with their own grief, so the young woman had no one with whom she could seek comfort. She chose to deal with the pain by repressing it, and never spoke about it again.

However, she carried a tremendous feeling of guilt. "It was my fault she died. I was the one who distracted the driver and I didn't make sure that her shock was treated," she reasoned. To make up for her sense of guilt and condemnation, she later provided enough equipment for a whole hospital in that country, but it did not help her own condition.

Guilt and condemnation make you feel as if you do not deserve anything good. Because of this, the woman was unable to set boundaries in her life, or say "no" when necessary. Consequently, she was being misused and had become very tired. The solution was to forgive herself for what had happened in South America. We prayed that the shock of the experience, guilt and condemnation would be removed. Afterward she felt much better, and God gave her new strength. One problem remained however: she had difficulty receiving God's forgiveness. At a conference shortly afterwards, a word of knowledge came to her, which

said, "You experienced a terrible trauma when you were 29 years of age. The Lord has forgiven you!" From that moment on, she was completely free.

Love your neighbour as yourself!

When the Pharisees asked Jesus what the most important commandment was (see Mark 12:28-32), He answered, "Love your neighbour as yourself". To love your neighbour as yourself can, for some, sound impossible. Can you love that much? For others it is the opposite. Should you not love more?

If you do not forgive yourself for mistakes and failures it is hard to love yourself. Instead, you dislike and maybe even hate yourself.

Learn how to deal with your failures

We are all imperfect people who make mistakes. Both on a spiritual and human level it is important to learn how to handle our failures in the right way in order to be able to move on. This goes for both large and small things.

Being visually impaired, I daily experience little mishaps. At an early stage I began to laugh at things that happened. You can have a lot of fun at a party when you discover that you are drinking from your neighbour's coffee cup, or wipe your hands on what you think is a white napkin on your plate, but it turns out to be whipped cream. Or, when you hug a complete stranger that you thought was someone you knew. The opportunities to make a fool of yourself are many. You can either be terribly embarrassed or have great fun.

Once we were invited to a fancy dinner with a family where the husband was a surgeon. We had never been guests at this home before, and there were no children present, which would have guaranteed a more relaxed atmosphere. There we sat at the elegant dinner table, trying to remember every rule of etiquette there is. Soon it was time to begin the meal. I then discovered it was very difficult to get the roast beef into my mouth, because the fork was so wide. I had used the serving fork! It broke the ice and we had a pleasant dinner.

A good piece of advice is not to take yourself too seriously! Keep a distance from your failures. You will feel better; you won't give up so easily and will therefore be more successful in life.

I was recently admiring my co-worker's newborn in the baby carriage until the mother bluntly informed me that the baby was not in the carriage. She said, "I'm feeding the baby right now." Only the baby's hat was in the baby carriage. We have laughed about this many times. I have on more than one occasion stretched out my hand to greet someone that did not have arms or hands. In this type of situation I need to be well able to handle my mistakes, especially since those around me cannot tell I am visually impaired.

On another occasion I walked into the pharmacy and took my place in the queue. Then I thought, "They've moved things around a lot since I was last here. There are so many bottles on the shelves". Suddenly I realised that I had lined up in the liquor store, the shop next to the pharmacy. I hurried out, hoping that no one had recognised me!

"Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm." — Winston Churchill

In our spiritual lives and also in ministry, it is very important that we forgive ourselves and leave our failures behind us. Peter is a great example for us. If anybody failed, it was Peter. Just think how he chopped off the ear of a soldier in the garden of Gethsemane. With assurance he told Jesus that even if everyone else denied Him, he never would. Yet, Peter denied Jesus three times and cursed and swore. Can you imagine how he felt? He must have been convinced he was a total failure. But after the resurrection, Jesus said to the women who met Him, "Especially greet Peter!" This is the attitude of Jesus toward us as well. On the day of Pentecost, Peter was the disciple who preached and 3000 people were saved! There is hope for all of us!

We will look further at the importance of forgiving ourselves in chapter 19 ("Sex outside marriage") and chapter 20 ("Shame, guilt and condemnation").

 *"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you."*
Philippians 3:13-15

Chapter 8

Reconciled to others

The first time I heard teaching about forgiving others who have hurt us was in the United States about 20 years ago. The teaching was from the Lord's Prayer and it was explained that there are different meanings to the word "forgive" in the original passage. One meaning of the word is purely a legal fact — it has nothing to do with feelings or emotions, but merely a position. For example, a judge might not like the person being accused but is forced to acquit him due to a lack of evidence. It is a legal matter, an act of the will.

Forgiveness needs to start at this point; you cannot wait for feelings which may come later. This is also a matter of forgiving, from your heart, those who have not themselves asked for forgiveness. Matthew 6:12 says, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors". Verses 14-15 continue, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins".

The person who asks for forgiveness is no longer guilty. Any unbeliever can forgive someone who asks for it, simply as the decent thing to do, but in fact to forgive somebody who is guilty demands much more than this. It means laying down your right to be bitter and disappointed, and choosing to forgive and bless instead.

The night after that teaching on forgiveness I woke up at about 3 a.m. and, wide-awake, I got down on my knees to pray. This happens very seldom to me, as I normally sleep very well. The Lord reminded me of my relationship with my sister-in-law, which, although good, was not quite right. We had bought an air conditioner on hire-purchase, which my sister-in-law later took over. When we made the transfer, I found out that I had to cover one extra payment. This was not in fact a big issue, so I had pushed aside the feelings it roused in me, telling myself, "It doesn't really matter".

However, the unfairness of the situation continued often to come into my thoughts, although I always pushed it down again. Now the Lord showed me that this was not acceptable, telling me, "You need to for-

give, because you haven't". I confessed my disappointment as sin and expressed forgiveness toward my sister-in-law, and then I blessed her. After that I went to sleep quite quickly.

In the morning the telephone rang, and I learned that my sister-in-law had had a heart attack and gone to be with the Lord. In the midst of my sorrow I could only express my thankfulness to God that He had woken me so that I could deal with my unforgiveness. This also spoke to me strongly of how God sees the seeming trivialities in life. Forgiveness is real, with real situations and people. There are also many people who have had to deal with the need for reconciliation with someone who has already left this life. Even this is possible, as what is most important is what takes place in our own hearts.

I want to explain what it means to be reconciled to others. Reconciliation means to lay down your right to be bitter. It goes against all logical and rational thinking. You might think that, because you were treated so badly, you have every right in the world to be bitter, but this bitterness destroys your life and so is worth thinking about! There might be much to work through and it can take quite some time in prayer, relying on God's help and love, before you can even get to the point of forgiveness. Be honest with God and tell Him just how you feel, how you see it and what the situation is. He can handle hearing it all, just as it is.

You might even be bitter and disappointed with God for what has happened, but He can even handle hearing that. I have a drawing of a little boy sitting in a big ear and the text under it reads: "Talk to God about all your problems; He cares for you." God can handle your reactions and will not throw you out. Just imagine, God has many different nationalities in His family, and many different personalities, some with more fiery temperaments than others, and He loves them all just as much!

When you communicate with God, something starts happening on the inside of you. A shaft of light begins to shine on the areas that you find dark and difficult. Forgiveness is a process and sometimes it starts as only a small beam of light, but it releases God's miraculous power. Let Psalm 37 speak to your heart. During a very difficult situation God spoke to me through this Psalm. The Psalms can be an enormous comfort during hard times, as many of them were written during persecution and

other difficult circumstances. Verses 7 - 8 read: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently on him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret - it leads only to evil." (The Swedish Bible says, "Let bitterness go.") Read the whole Psalm and let God encourage you.

Forgiveness and reconciliation have power to bring about change. Below I would like to share some wonderful testimonies concerning forgiveness and reconciliation, but first, a humorous story to think about. A woman visited her priest to pour out her heart concerning her husband, who was troublesome in many ways. What should she do? The priest was a good counsellor, and gently referred the woman to Romans 12:20. "This speaks about rewarding evil with good. In doing so, you will "heap burning coals on his head". " The woman answered: "Honestly, I haven't gone that far, but on two occasions I did burn his behind with an iron." Dare I say that she misunderstood the verse?

The interpreter

After a teaching session on forgiveness at a Bible school in Southeast Asia, something remarkable happened. During a time of ministry relating to the subject, the newly saved interpreter, who was about 45 years old, ended up on the floor. There she lay for about three hours without moving. The lunch break passed and the next session began, with a student as the substitute interpreter, before she was able to get up.

Later the interpreter told us, "While I was on the floor under the power of the Holy Spirit, my whole life passed before me and I could deal with all the injustices I had experienced. When that was finished I could get up, and the back problem I have had for so long has gone!"

What grace. The interpreter was very busy with various tasks at the Bible school, and I think that is why God gave her some extra time to deal with her own issues. The Lord sees to it that all our needs are met.

Forty years without God

A woman had lived her whole life without God, having decided in her early teenage years that she wanted nothing to do with Him or with Christians. But someone was interceding for her. (We have noticed that many who become Christians have been interceded for by friends, family, neighbours or others, for quite some time. God answers prayer!)

After 30 years of marriage, of which the last ten were very difficult, she found a letter on the kitchen table. Her husband wanted a divorce. She was so deeply hurt that she decided to commit suicide. She got a rope and went to their boathouse down at the quay to hang herself, when in came another man who shared the boathouse with them. He was never there at that time of the morning, except on that day, and she was forced to postpone her plan until the next day. Back home the telephone rang. It was a relative, who said, "Don't do what Eva did." This relative's daughter Eva had committed suicide. "No, I won't do that," replied the woman. Why her relative, who did not know the Lord, had phoned to say such a thing to her she had no idea, but God can use any person He likes, including non-Christian relatives.

The woman moved back to her hometown and one day someone offered her a Bible. She accepted it only to get out of the awkwardness of the situation. Later, as she sat on her couch paging through it, she said out loud, "Jesus, you have never helped me!" To her great astonishment an audible voice replied, "Haven't I?" She turned and looked around, but saw no one. She asked, "Do you exist?" The gentle voice answered, "Yes". After talking for a while she switched on the TV, and there was a Christian programme being broadcast at that very moment. She participated in the prayer of salvation and was saved.

God chose a different way to reach her. She had decided never to listen to Christians so Jesus revealed Himself to her directly. Soon she was in fellowship with other Christians, and was given a teaching cassette on forgiveness. This tape included songs, testimonies and Scripture verses, all connected to forgiveness and reconciliation. As recommended, she made a list of all the people who had hurt her in her lifetime. She prayed and forgave each one, crossing out each name as she did so. Now the restoration could start.

After the divorce, her husband was operated on for a benign brain tumour. The doctors said it must have been there for ten years, and it had caused personality changes, making him very unkind. The woman had also started having severe pain and was diagnosed with fibromyalgia as well as other physical problems. However, during the process of her forgiving others, exciting things began to happen. She decided to go out on a mission project for six months. Physically it was impossible, but shortly before she was due to leave she was healed. The process of

reconciliation made this possible. She has now been in mission work for six years.

Psychosomatic illnesses

Two non-Christian doctors listened to the same tape on forgiveness which I mentioned above. Their comment was that the cassette should be on sale at every doctor's clinic in the country. Physicians are aware of the connection that often exists between bitterness and certain symptoms of illness in cases where the results of treatment have been limited. In Sweden, I have heard through the years that 65-85% of all illnesses have psychosomatic causes. Often bitterness, anger and unforgiveness are the underlying emotional causes.

There are differing opinions on this, but the fact remains that there is a strong connection between negative emotions and certain physical problems. Proverbs 14:30 says, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones". This verse in the Swedish Bible refers to bitterness rather than envy. In Matthew 18:21-35 we can also see the connection: "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked serv-

ant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.'"

Jesus answered Peter's question with this parable of the merciless servant. After having had his debt cancelled, which would have taken a lifetime even to pay back the interest, he ends up being thrown in jail by his master after all because he refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him a small amount. When we live in bitterness and disappointment we are outside God's protection and the enemy has a right to torment us. We have all experienced disappointment, and soon after headaches, stomach-aches, self-pity, discouragement, depression or some other unpleasant symptom makes itself felt. The "torturers" affect both the body and the soul.

Frogs have it easy; they can eat what bugs them.

Pastor healed after forgiving his superior

Harold was a young man, completely committed and involved as a Bible teacher in Kenya, and showing signs of great progress in his Christian career. However, this created jealousy in the heart of his district supervisor, who feared that one day Harold would take over his job. Consequently he started undermining Harold's confidence by spreading untruths about him, which eventually got back to Harold. Their relationship turned sour, and Harold would have gladly been free of his district supervisor.

The relationship grew steadily worse, and then one night when Harold and most of his relatives were away a gang of thieves broke into his hut. They not only stole his belongings, but killed his twelve-year-old cousin who was sleeping on the floor. When Harold returned home, he was terribly shocked at what had happened. Speculations began that his supervisor had hired the gang of thieves, although there was no evidence for this. Hatred grew in his heart toward the man, and he moved

away from that area in order to have nothing more to do with him. He settled in a neighbouring district and continued serving as a pastor.

Not long afterwards, Harold began to develop physical problems and his health deteriorated. A missionary who had been away on furlough for 18 months noticed immediately how sick he was when Harold came to visit him. He walked slowly and sat on the edge of a chair, as he would get terrible chest pains if he sat back. He could only breathe in short, shallow gasps because of the pain. Harold told the missionary what had happened while he was away, and the missionary immediately saw the connection between Harold's hatred and the sickness, his unforgiveness and the pain. The missionary explained what the Bible says about unforgiveness, and soon Harold saw the connection himself. He was crushed at his sinfulness and humbled himself, asking God for forgiveness for his hatred and expressing forgiveness toward his supervisor. The missionary then prayed for the pain and took authority in the name of Jesus over the sickness. There was immediate relief and healing, and joy spread over Harold's face. He took a deep breath, sat back in the chair, and all the pain was gone! "It was an overwhelming experience which neither of us will ever forget," says the missionary. This happened 20 years ago and every time they are in contact they remind each other of God's healing power. Harold continues to serve God as a Bible teacher in East Africa.

Forgiveness releases others to change

The following testimony, as well as the one in the first chapter about the woman whose children were kidnapped, illustrates the truth in John 20:23 which says, "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven". We bind people up in their sin through our unforgiveness, but through forgiveness we can release them to change.

For many this is a new thought. There are various interpretations of John 20:23. My understanding is that this applies even to someone who has committed a serious sin or an injustice against someone else, but has asked neither God nor the person concerned for forgiveness. If the one who has been unjustly treated forgives the perpetrator in his heart and blesses him, then it works the same way in the spiritual realm as

when you stand in the gap for someone else's sin. You make a way for change and the power of reconciliation starts to work. We shall look more closely at this in chapter 17, "From where does our help come?".

An alcoholic father is set free

A woman wrote and told her story. Her father almost never showed any love toward her – no happy games, laughter or cuddles. Neither was there any demonstration of love between her parents. When she was a teenager, alcohol came into the picture.

The woman's mother always loved her and took care of her as best she could, but this story primarily concerns her relationship with her father. Things did not improve when she was told she was of the wrong gender and that she "should have been" a boy. She was the successor to the family business, which her father had built up from scratch, and so "should have been" a son. Her parents obviously did not consider it possible that a girl would do for the task.

The marriage ended in divorce. After that the girl distanced herself from her father, and over the next ten years they hardly ever met. However, she was a Christian, and the moment came when God began telling her that it was time to make contact with her father again, and to forgive him for all he had done to her. She was very tense when she drove to meet him, as he had been violent at times, but she knew that it was necessary. If God had said it, then of course He would also go with her.

Sure enough, God helped her to forgive her father from her heart, and she was able to ask him to forgive her for not caring about him for so long. They had a good time together that afternoon, sitting and talking like friends in a way they had never done before. This reconciliation between father and daughter was a great miracle, and the wonder continued when the father stopped drinking alcohol. He had been an alcoholic for more than 15 years, but without any treatment other than God's grace and reconciliation, he was set free. Many years later, just before he died, he was also saved.

Reconciliation affects our spiritual life

Reconciliation with others affects our relationship with God and our spiritual life. We see it in the Lord's Prayer: "... and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us."

A little girl had learnt the Lord's Prayer at Sunday School but had "translated" some of the more difficult words into language she understood: "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets." Even with the "new translation" she had the truth.

"Acquiring an offence keeps you from seeing your own character flaws because blame is deferred to another The way we respond to an injustice determines our future." — John Bevere

Reconciliation is the foundation for faith that moves mountains

Reconciliation is also the foundation to a higher level of revelation and faith that moves mountains. In Mark 11:22-25 we read: "'Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.'"

To you who are sick, or battling with faith, I would like to share some thoughts that have helped me very much. Healing is not a question of technique, methods and confessions. I have tried all that.

Jesus says in Matthew 17:20: "'I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.'" The mustard seed is a very small seed, about as big as a pinhead, but when it has grown up, it is as big as a tree.

If the size of our faith were important, Jesus could have said, "If you have faith as big as a plum stone ...". If you are born again, you have received a measure of faith, which is a wonderful gift from God. Romans 12:3 tells us this. Do not look down on your "little" faith. A uranium atom is tiny but has enormous power when it is released, enough to destroy a whole city. Your little mustard-seed faith also has tremendous power when it is released. It has been said that, according to mathematicians' calculations, if the energy in one mustard seed could be released, it would be enough to lift 27,000 tons one kilometre up in the air! What releases your faith is neither your will nor a method, but a word from God. This can come when you are reading your Bible, or listening to teaching from the Word. The Holy Spirit makes the Word alive to you, which releases your faith and carries you through all the hindrances on the way before the healing or answer to prayer is made manifest.

When our oldest son was ill, I received a Bible verse which carried me through the seven months of waiting, before all the doctors' question marks became exclamation marks. One word from God is the most wonderful thing there is. Prayers of faith, which move mountains of problems and disease, do not depend on the method or on the volume of our voice, but rather on channels that are free of disappointments so that the Holy Spirit can speak to us and release faith into the situation.

In John 17:20-23, Jesus speaks of God's glory which is released, and the powerful testimonies which are signs to the world when Christians become one. "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

You affect others

Bitterness and disappointment affect your own spiritual life, your relationships and how you feel physically and mentally. If you express your disappointment, you influence others, who then also feel bad because

of it. Hebrews 12:15: "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." An amplified translation says it this way: "... in order that no resentment (rancour, bitterness or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it." In fact, a bitter person ought to ask permission before contaminating someone else with his words! Otherwise, it is really a form of abuse.

Colossians 3:12-14 gives us direction: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

I heard someone say, "I'm a master at forgiveness". That would not be a bad title to try and achieve! In writing about forgiveness, my point is not to lay another burden on you or to weigh you down with another expectation of yourself. Do not think: "Isn't it enough that all these terrible things happened to me, without God demanding that I forgive all the horrible people too?" I am not expressing a demand, but an invitation to have your life changed. See it as a possibility for you to walk on the road of freedom.

When you lay down your right to be bitter and confess it as sin, God's miraculous power is released. That is what happened to the man in chapter three who had been tortured.

When you choose to live with Jesus, it is another decision you make which goes against rational thinking. You invite Jesus to be Lord of your life, and you confess the sins of pride and having things your own way. These two life-changing commitments then need to continue your whole life. Situations come up daily where your surrender needs to be renewed.

There are two words that are very similar: "bitter" and "better". The difference in the spelling of these two words is one small letter "i". If I allow the "I" in my life to hold on to bitterness, then I suffer the consequences of ill health and spiritual death. But if I allow God to work in me and to remove the "I" as I lay down my right and ask for forgiveness, then I become "better" and my whole life demonstrates it, both physically and spiritually. Choose to become "better" rather than "bitter".

When everything falls apart

What I am about to tell you happened 18 months after the majority of this book was complete. As you will notice, I share experiences from my own life with you, not only the good, but also the difficulties I have been through. My life's deepest crisis happened when I thought that I had finished the book, and I would like to share this with you too.

After 27 years of marriage my husband wanted a divorce. He had taken six months off work and had accompanied our youngest son to the States to live with his older brother Michael and study in America as his siblings had done at his age. Unexpectedly, Michael, who worked in the military, was sent to what was then Yugoslavia and our youngest son had to return home just a few weeks after school started. However, my husband did not return. He sent me a message that he was going to stay in the States, and that he wanted a divorce. What I never thought would happen to me, and what I always thought was the worst that could happen, was about to become my reality. It did not help to refuse to sign any divorce papers, and soon it was on the courtroom tables with six months' probation.

This was an incredibly difficult time. Of my own choice, I stepped down from ministry, teaching and laying on of hands during prayer. I felt profound grief over the fact that what the Lord had put together was about to break into pieces. I could not talk about it without crying, which was very embarrassing when it happened in public places, but I was reminded, "You should be glad that you can cry about it so that you don't bottle it up inside".

Divorce can cause a more difficult grieving process than death, as the absent person is still living. Divorce is common today even amongst Christians, but I am convinced that it is not God's way out. It has become an easy way of solving relational problems and is a curse of our era. I did not want to get divorced, and continually worked at forgiving and keeping the way back open, but that is not how it turned out.

Instead, I was about to experience my life's most dramatic demonstration of how God helps us through the forgiveness process. My husband came to Sweden for a quick visit with the children and to fetch his belongings. I could not bear to see him that day, nor had I the strength to do so. That afternoon there was a meeting at the church and I testi-

fied how the story of Joseph in the Old Testament, and his attitude during trials, had become a revelation to me in my situation. Suddenly God's Spirit came over me and made it very clear to me that my husband and I should part as friends. I went straight to the apartment where he was packing his belongings, and with God's help and in my children's presence, I could thank him for all the good things we had experienced together over those many years. That I could do this was nothing short of a miracle, and with it the heaviness and grief left me! Since then I have been able to deal with the loss. It is God who gives me the grace to go on. That fills me with unending thankfulness even in the middle of life's most painful times.

During this dark time, one of the greatest comforts to me was my little grandchild. When the divorce was final I also received much support from the people in my church. Questions like, "Will I ever preach again?" and "Who wants to read my book now?" had tormented me. Now I saw the light on the horizon. The first time I preached after a six-month break, my pastor came with me to lend support and we had a weekend of meetings together. God gave me strength, the anointing flowed, the ministry returned and many say there is now a stronger presence of God in the services than before.

Because of reconciliation, divorce has not meant the end of spiritual service for either one of us; instead, we have experienced grace. Grace means "undeserved favour". I do not believe that divorce is in the plan of God. His plan for us was to be married for life and to give our children a "whole" home. Where children are involved they always pay the highest price, and this has been very difficult to see. My biggest struggle has been with feelings of guilt that I cannot make up for what has happened. Divorce is not a simple solution and I cannot bless it.

However, after nearly a year, and when the reconciliation had taken place in my heart, God started something new with new prerequisites. In John 20:21-23 we read that, after Jesus' resurrection, He came to His disciples and spoke to them: ""Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."" There has been much emphasis on the blessings of having Jesus' peace, being

equipped with the Holy Spirit and sent out, but if our choice to forgive does not follow, we are not the blessing to others that God intended. I received God's grace to forgive and release my ex-husband so that we could both move on.

But there is more. The Bible says that we must bless and not curse. To bless does not mean we must approve or condone all that a person does. We bless in obedience to God's Word instead of cursing, which is disobedience. Blessing has a double effect: it releases God's ability to work in the person's life whom you are blessing, and it helps you to keep your thoughts and emotions open towards reconciliation. Forgiveness is a process which runs deep. The deeper the reconciliation the greater the forgiveness of the person involved.

While waiting to be able to write what I have now shared, God gave me a period of six months in which I worked on another book called "The best day of my life – a school class visits heaven". It was healing for me to be able to focus on heaven. Life takes on the right perspective when our focus is on eternity.

This book was published in Sweden 18 months after the divorce. I had continued to bless my former husband daily, and after a couple of years, a new wife was included in my prayers of blessing. I knew it was the key to God's blessing on my life and the prerequisite for my continuing with His blessing in ministry. I also feel that God has given me a mandate to preach about reconciliation!

Before printing this English version, six years have passed since the divorce. I recently met my ex-husband and his new wife together for the first time and I can give a wonderful report. They were not only in my prayers as part of my family half a world away – both of them actually felt like family and we had a great time together. That is God's healing and restoration released through forgiveness and active blessing!

Everything can be turned to something good!

All the evil we refuse to become bitter about, God can turn to something good. A friend from Lapland said to me: "A mountain birch does not break in a storm, but bends and becomes stronger and tougher. When we think we're strong, we become hard, but when we know that we're weak, we become humble and merciful and dependent on God.

Then we become strong in Him."

One of the foremost examples of forgiveness in the Bible is the story of Joseph, who forgave his brothers. They were jealous of him, threw him in a pit and sold him as a slave. He was taken to Egypt where he was falsely accused of trying to rape Potiphar's wife. This led to a very long jail sentence, but because Joseph did not become bitter God could lift him up. Joseph served his fellow prisoners and held on to God in spite of everything that had happened to him.

In time he became Pharaoh's right-hand man and in that position became the saviour of many people during the years of famine and crop failure. His brothers also reached a point of need and came to Egypt to buy wheat. They were very fearful when Joseph told them who he was. But he says in Genesis 50:20-21: ""You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them."

If you refuse to give yourself to bitterness, then God can turn anything in your life to good. However painful it has been, something good can come out of it. Remember, God did not send the bad, but He can turn it to something positive when you allow Him to do it. Pray that God will turn all the negatives – in whatever area of your life – to something good. Again I want to remind you of the words in 2 Corinthians 1:3b-4: "...the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." With this background we can read Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." That means, of course, that not all things that happen are God's will, but everything that you allow to go through reconciliation is turned to, and works together for, the good.

 *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:12-14*

Chapter 9

Inherited family weaknesses

Throughout humankind, in every society, it is a well known fact that children do not do what their parents *say*, but do what they *do*. It is laid down within the order of creation that parents are to be an example to their children. In areas where we have failed, our children then receive a negative inheritance. They in turn may pass it on to their children. This is a matter of negative attitudes, values and behaviour as a lifestyle, not single failures in sin.

I have heard statistics of child abuse in the States which revealed that over 90% of those who abused their children were themselves abused as children. They must have hated what they were doing, but a forceful power caused them to repeat what had happened to them. Within psychiatric circles it is believed that those who are involved in incest have themselves been abused in that way as children. A controlling force drives them to repeat the abuse.

Many who have had alcoholic parents are themselves alcoholics. Those who have grown up in a family practising gossip and slander often follow the same pattern. The behaviour, attitudes and values continue on down through the generations. A woman studying psychotherapy said that the social legacy we inherit has recently become a prevailing theme. A number of interesting books she has been studying observe the following:

- There is a social legacy passed on through the generations, and we need to become aware of this and think in terms of generations in order to be able to break the pattern.
- An example could be a girl who has been beaten and, as an adult, becomes a victim who is drawn toward men who abuse. If she does not receive help to break this pattern, the heritage continues to be passed on.
- Only if the family and its social environment are placed in focus can the unhappy heritage be stopped. The family must be seen as a whole, and treated as a whole. Each member needs to learn to speak differ-

ently, for example, to stop routine negative expressions like, "You're just like your stubborn father". The pattern needs to be broken.

According to psychotherapy, enormous resources are called for within both society and the family to bring about change in these negative behaviour patterns. However, personal repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation can result in miracles and break the force of the generational repetition.

Transformed to a happy home

A young woman came forward for prayer after a service. She was crying and was desperate about her behaviour towards her oldest child, who was four at the time. Starting from when he was only two months old, the woman had found she could not control her temper. She would shake the child violently and often scream at him. When the boy was two years old she started pinching him and hitting him in the face. She was a Christian and often cried and asked for forgiveness, but could not change her behaviour.

Now for the first time she was telling somebody about it. I asked about her childhood, and she said that it had been very chaotic, with much screaming, mood swings and physical aggression. Her mother would hit her often and would pull her by her clothes until they tore.

When the woman married, she told her husband, "I'll never be like my mother and I'll never behave like her; it was wrong and I don't want a home like that!" She became desperate when she discovered she was doing exactly the same as her mother and had no power to change it.

She now confessed her own and her parents' sin, and received forgiveness and freedom from dominating generational forces. One year later, she testified that her negative behaviour had ended at that moment, and that she now has a peaceful, happy home.

God's plan of action

Although problems can be passed down from one generation to the next, God still holds each individual responsible for his or her own life. On the day of judgement we will not be able to blame our grandpa! It is not his fault that you have lived a bad life, but it is in our human nature to

blame someone else. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the snake. God, being fair, has made it possible for us to be released from the heritage of negative behaviour, attitudes and values.

I want to tell you about the first experience I had of how God changes people when they deal with the negative heritage passed on from their parents. Nearly fourteen years ago, a young woman looked us up, wanting prayer. She had become a Christian, but was addicted to pills. She felt so terrible about this that she had contemplated admitting herself to a psychiatric clinic to go through detoxification. As we were about to pray for this abuse, an unknown word came into my thoughts. "What is Sobril?", I wondered out loud. "That's the pill that I'm addicted to," answered the woman.

She used the medication for anxiety, and when I asked the Lord where the anxiety originated, He said that there was murder in past generations. I hesitated for a while before I dared suggest such a possibility, but since then I have had many opportunities to pray for similar things. The young woman told me how her mother's first husband had murdered her grandmother and then committed suicide. Her mother had been married four times, and this woman was born out of the third marriage. At the age of 14 she had started taking medication for anxiety. Together we read from 1 Peter 1:18-19, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ". After I had explained this truth we prayed. She placed herself in the gap as a representative for her mother's first husband, and confessed the murder and suicide as sin, and asked for forgiveness. Even her mother's escape into alcohol and men was confessed. She also needed to ask for forgiveness for her own substance abuse and incorrect lifestyle.

After prayer for freedom from all these things, I went home with the young woman. I was given a whole bag of pills that I disposed of. A miracle happened! She had no withdrawal symptoms and all anxiety was gone! In the 14 years since that time she has continued to be free from anxiety. It is perhaps good to mention that she herself chose to trust God to stop with her medication in this way, but usually prescribed medicine is tapered off under the care of a physician.

Exodus 20:3-5 tells us that children and descendants will be visited

with a curse if we get involved in idol worship. "You shall have no other gods before me. . . . You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments." Blessing flows to the thousandth generation when we love and follow God! The children of Israel knew this very well, and usually they confessed their forefathers' sins as well as their own. We can read about that in Nehemiah 9:2: "They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers."

Because of Jesus' death on the cross, He paid the price for our sin, and we do not need a new sacrifice for every sin, neither do we need to ask forgiveness for the same sin over and over again. It is the same for the negative heritage we have as well. According to 1 Peter 1:18-19, Jesus also died for the sins of our forefathers, and His blood cleanses us and sets us completely free. But this does not happen automatically. We need to stand in the gap in prayer, as a representative of the generations, so that the driving force can be broken. Then that area of weakness becomes like any other temptation, which can be overcome with the help of the spiritual weapons that God has put at our disposal. Chapter 25 deals with these weapons.

Some of the most read portions in Isaiah, filled with wonderful promises, are chapters 58 and 61. The words were originally directed to the children of Israel, but we can take them for ourselves spiritually, as they are for us today as well. Some of these wonderful promises I will take the freedom to apply and connect to Exodus 20:5.

Isaiah 58:12: "Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings."

Isaiah 61:4: "They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations."

You can be part of repairing what has been destroyed in your family in various areas; your offspring can help build up the "land" again and live in the blessing of grace to the thousandth generation because you love God and live by His commands.

Occult practice in the family

Practice of the occult, and unnatural deaths also, affect the following generations physically as well as mentally.

A one-year-old girl had since birth been troubled by asthma and respiratory infections and was often taken to the hospital in emergency. One day her mother rang and asked for prayer. She had seen a pattern. The little girl always became sick after she had been with her aunt! This woman was not born again but had also remarked on the girl's reaction to her visits. The mother now said that the aunt was due for another visit. A word from the Lord exposed the fact that in the past the family had been involved in the occult, and now the aunt was dabbling with various occult things. When the mother had become a Christian she had not broken the negative inheritance she had received for herself and her descendants.

The mother prayed a short prayer over the telephone: "In Jesus' name I stand as our family's representative and confess all occult involvement as sin, and I renounce all effects of this over myself and my family."

Then we closed the door to any influence from the occult, and since that day the girl has had no more asthma or respiratory infections. There were also no longer any problems related to her aunt's visits. The girl will soon be eleven, and is doing very well!

Adopted

A family from another town approached our church for help with their 15-year-old daughter. She had been in a psychiatric youth home for six months, as she constantly tried to commit suicide and heard voices speaking to her about hate, self-hatred, destruction and death.

The girl was adopted from India and her biological parents were Hindus. We explained the importance of breaking the influence of Hinduism over the girl, even if she had grown up in a Christian family. Together with her adoptive parents, we prayed for a release from all the Hindu influences.

The next day the girl went with us to our youth camp, as she had been given permission to leave the hospital for the summer break. While there, we could minister to her on a daily basis through counselling and prayer, and before the week was over, she had completely changed! She radiated joy. The psychologists and other people were very curious, but of

course it was Jesus who had set her free and healed her!

In a conversation with her psychologist later, the woman wanted to know what we had done. I explained that the girl's problem was an inner conflict between Hinduism and Christianity. When she was free to choose which religion she wanted, the darkness left her. This is not within the psychiatric domain, but maybe we should work together a bit more to bring greater healing to many in the same situation.

This happened 11 years ago, and the girl has a strong testimony of God's power. John 8:36 says, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed".

At this point you might be thinking that you know nothing about your past relatives, and that you would not know what to pray. However, in nearly all families there are traces of superstition, fortune-telling and witchcraft, or perhaps someone has looked for healing in the wrong places, in something other than God. You might think of, or know about, other things too. There will be no damage done if you have prayed "incorrectly". My challenge to you is that you stand in the gap for all witchcraft, sorcery and fortune-telling, or anything else you may know about or even suspect in your family. Ask God for forgiveness and renounce all consequences in your own and your descendants' lives.

If you are adopted, or have adopted children, it is extremely important that you break the influence of the biological parents' religions, etc..

Some suggested ways to help your adopted children:

- Break influences from the biological parents' religion.
- Stand in the gap and ask for forgiveness for other sins within the family line, e.g. impurity, rejection, and any other known or suspected sins.
- Pray for healing of the soul for the time in the womb.
- Pray for the shocks of separation from the biological parents, any consequent stay at orphanages or foster homes, and the departures from these places.
- Pray for a new foundational security.

The Revelation Grows

Just think, what a wonderful gospel we have that includes freedom even from our family weaknesses! Once when I was to teach on this at a meeting, a non-Christian man who had never been to church before came in. His wife had just been saved. My first thought was to change the subject, as it might have been much too deep for him to understand, but suddenly I understood this could give hope to anyone! I then spoke with an evangelistic emphasis. It obviously did not put him off, as he got saved three days later!

If you have been a Christian a long while, you might be wondering why you have not heard much teaching on this before. This has been preached around the world for the last couple of decades, but let us have a look at church history. In the Early Church, it was very obvious that lives were lived in God's supernatural power, but this almost completely disappeared with time. Constantine made Christianity into a state religion in the fourth century, and it sounded good, but it ended very sadly. The enemy used people more or less to disarm the dynamic of the Christian message. People became bound up in religiosity when the state religion no longer followed God's Word. This is what happened to the foundational truths within the Christian faith:

- Instead of having our sins forgiven by the redemptive death of Jesus, people could "buy" their freedom from sin.
- People prayed to the Virgin Mary and other saints instead of to Jesus, God's Son.
- Witnessing and missions were reduced to Crusades, using swords and death.
- Only priests were permitted to read God's Word, in Latin. The Bible was not for everyone.
- It was taught that God sent sickness to discipline us.
- According to James chapter five, the sick should be anointed with oil, but this became a ritual called "the last rites", which was administered only to the dying.
- Praise in the Spirit became "Gregorian hymns", where the spontaneous words and melodies were written down and made unchangeable.
- The message of freedom from generational sins disappeared.

Some of these substitutes have, quite justly, become stumbling blocks to and arguments against the Christian faith. People often refer to the Crusades, which took place in the Middle Ages. Some years ago Youth With A Mission, a worldwide missions organisation, initiated a Reconciliation Walk, following the footprints of the Crusaders, from Europe to Jerusalem. In place after place, those on the walk asked for forgiveness for the sins committed in the name of Jesus Christ centuries ago.

In the 1300's, when the level of unrighteousness had reached its height, John Wycliffe translated the Bible to English from the Latin Vulgate. Wycliffe became a forerunner to the Reformation with his teaching on justification through faith. The vision of the missions organisation Wycliffe Bible Translators is that the Bible, or parts thereof, be available in all languages of the world. At the turn of the past century, this vision was nearly fulfilled!

Martin Luther, in the 1500's, became God's tool on a greater scale, establishing the truth of justification by faith. Over the past few centuries, one truth after the other has been revealed, and on the whole, most of the Biblical truths that had been distorted have been restored. Each area has been reclaimed through struggle and persecution, with many giving their lives for the truths which we today take for granted. Let us be thankful! Following is a sampling of the developing history of the Church. It is not exhaustive, but lists some of the more well-known movements which have paved the way for us:

- The Anabaptists instituted believer's baptism in the 1500's, which became the foundation for the Baptist Movement.
- With John Wesley came the message of holiness and discipleship, and so the Methodists came into being.
- William Booth devoted himself to evangelism and social concerns, and so the Salvation Army was founded.
- The Pentecostal movement, with blessings such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, came into being in the early 1900's.
- A Healing Revival started in the States during the 1940's.
- The Jesus People made Jesus the real centre of life in the 1960's and 70's.
- The Charismatic Movement reached various churches and fellowships with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Spirit and prayer groups.

- YWAM (Youth With A Mission) and other organisations started training and sending out young people, with a vision to reach all the people of the world.
- The Faith Movement has emphasised faith and the Word for the past few decades.
- "Vineyard" has sought to relate the charismatic message to present-day society.
- Various prayer movements with the ministry of intercession and a reconciliatory mission are in progress throughout the world today.

There is a lot going on, and in the future we will be able to read about what is now happening in Church history. In a few more years, more truths will be established. God wants to give us the fullness of the gospel for the end times and the reaping of the great harvest, at the same time as there will be an increase in the confrontation with the powers of darkness.

The Swedish Pentecostal apostle Lewi Petrus said that the Pentecostal movement was not everything nor complete, but just the beginning of the complete restoration. More revelation will be restored to the Church during the end times. Denominations that have been founded on fragments of truth have at times come to a standstill on those points. Peter also wanted to build shrines on the Mount of Transfiguration, where everything looked so wonderful, far away from everyday life. But God wants us to have the fullness. One of the truths that has been revealed for many the world over, is that we can be free from the effects of our forefathers' wrongdoings. The commotion is starting to settle and the truth is being established!

 *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." 1 Peter 1:18-19*

Chapter 10

God is good

In the last chapter we considered how there is a law within creation that parents will be an example to their children, and even an example to them of what God is like. Our concept of God is formed by our relationship with our own parents, especially in regards to our father. Without being aware of the connection, we often have an image of God which is similar to our father. As we are imperfect humans, this can have both good and bad aspects.

My own father was extremely considerate and always wanted the best for me. It has consequently been easy for me to trust God and His help in every detail of my life. It has not been difficult to understand that I am more precious than the lilies and sparrows that the Lord clothes and feeds (Matt. 6).

On the other hand, my father did not exercise his authority. He was very kind and lenient and when I was up to my tricks as a young person it did not matter to me what my Dad thought about my nonsense, as long as nobody else found out. As a foundation in my relationship with God, this was far from desirable.

Later on in life, I heard teaching on how our concept of God is formed. Then I understood why it did not bother me if God knew my shortcomings, but only if people knew about them. To me, God was just kind. When I faced this misconception, I was overcome with sorrow for my sin and a fear of God came over me which I had never experienced before. I fell on my knees and wept in the presence of the Lord. God is not only kind, but also loving and just; He does not condone sin, but forgives us when we ask Him.

A fatherless refugee from East Germany

A man was born into a very poor family towards the end of the Second World War in what later became East Germany. The mother escaped with the children to Sweden, and the only thing the boy ever heard about his father was how harsh he had been. The mother had had to work for four hours to get a glass of milk, even though her in-laws

owned the cows.

Many years later this young man became a Christian and Jesus became his best friend. He could talk to Him about everything. The Holy Spirit gave him joy and power and he flowed in the gifts of the Spirit. However, God as the Father he feared. The image he had of a father was someone who is hard and unmerciful. There was no desire to get to know a god like that.

Thankfully, he received help in coming to know God as his Father. He had thought the Father was someone you met one day "up there", but in a time of prayer Jesus said to him, "I am the way the truth and the life, and today we are going to meet the Father". He then went through the healing experience of actually feeling he was sitting in the Father's lap, and he was restored and set free from his bad childhood memories. He began a father-son relationship with God that he had never experienced before in his life.

Is Dad in a good or bad mood?

Another man who had often experienced the power of God still had difficulty trusting in God's care in various areas of his life. His father had been very kind, considerate and loving, but he also had a terrible temper. Explosions of anger could happen at any time and place, and life felt like a path through a minefield.

In this kind of situation it is easy to develop the idea that God is the same way: one day He does miracles and the next He is causing accidents and diseases in people's lives. But this is a lie; God is not like that. James 1:17 says that "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows". He does not change from good to evil.

He only saw his parents during school holidays

A man grew up attending a boarding school for missionary children, and as it took 24 hours by train to get home, he only went for Christmas and summer holidays. Due to the lack of communication facilities he had no way of contacting his father for help when he needed it.

As an adult, this man had difficulty counting on God's help in times of need. If something had to be done, he had to help himself, he reasoned. The truth, however, is found in 1 Peter 5:7: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Grandpa took the father's place

A woman's biological father disappeared before she was born, so she grew up with her mother, stepfather and halfsiblings. She was 11 years old when she found out in a terrible way that her stepfather was not her real Dad. He was not well at the time and swore at her, calling her illegitimate and blaming her for all her siblings' misbehaviour. Eventually the parents divorced, and the teenage girl's rebellion went into high gear. When she was 25 years old she became a Christian and the miraculous happened: she experienced an inner relationship with God the Father, and knew that she now had a Dad.

Later she realised how her grandfather had been her security in life. He had been a wonderful, generous and fair man, and it was now his character traits that were being applied to God.

"A father isn't worth having!"

A teenage girl who became a Christian was brought up by her single mother, who lived a disorderly life involving a lot of alcohol and many different men. The girl's concept of a father was someone rude, filthy and often drunk. When she was saved and was told that "God is your Father now", she felt as if she had been hit below the belt. Who needs a father? He is not worth having. The understanding that God is a good and loving Father was a foundation that had to be laid in her life so that she could continue to grow.

How can our concept of God be changed?

A career is very important for many fathers, and countless children feel as though they are not as important as their father's business relations. In many families too, material possessions seem more valuable than the children do and the home becomes a minefield. Crystal vases and valuable ornaments are not to be touched, or an explosion occurs.

Many believe that comets, presidents, preachers and everything else in the world is more important to God than just "little old me". Also if you have not been able to rely on what your parents have said and promised, it is very difficult to trust what God promises.

Those who receive attention and love only when they have performed well, easily fall into the trap of believing that God also demands per-

formance before He is satisfied with them. This means that if we get sick and cannot perform, we are in a dangerous place. A completely wrong image of God has been formed. Praise the Lord, as Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast".

There are no perfect parents, and there is something in almost everyone's concept of God that needs to be corrected. So to start with, we need to forgive our parents that they have not been able to portray God's character correctly in every area. Then we need to ask God to remove our parents' negative character traits from our understanding of God so that we can correctly see His true character. Study God's character in the Bible and pray that He will reveal His truth to you. Pray also that He will lay down a correct, God-fearing attitude which will become a foundation in your Christian life.

A teacher once explained the difference between God's mercy and His grace in this way: "It is God's mercy that we do not get what we deserve, but it is God's grace that we receive what we do not deserve."

A man once expressed it like this:

Before salvation, I thought calling some things sin was God's way of keeping us from having a good time.

After salvation, I saw that it was God's way of keeping us from hurting ourselves.

The concept of God established through the Word of God

These wonderful Bible verses show the true character of God the Father:

James 1:17: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Matthew 7:11: "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Lamentations 3:22-26: "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

Jeremiah 31:3: "The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness."

Isaiah 49:15-16: "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."

Psalms 68:5-6: "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing...."

Psalms 103:1-18: "Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children - with those who keep his covenant and re-

member to obey his precepts."

Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal more words to you personally.

Our Triune God

The Bible speaks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit — three different persons in the Godhead, but they are still completely One. A common way of explaining this is to compare it to water in three different forms, but still water: ice, liquid and steam.

Man is also a triune being; we consist of the body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23-24). We are created in God's image to glorify Him on earth. God is not interested in your spirit only — that you will get saved and go to heaven. He is just as concerned that your soul and body reflect Him on earth. This is your highest calling. The Trinity works together so that you and I can become whole persons.

At the beginning of this book we spoke about Jesus being "the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:24-25). Now we have learnt more about the Father, who is our security in our spiritual walk. He is called "the Father of our spirits" (Heb. 12:9). Later we will be considering the Holy Spirit who lives in our body. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Rom. 8:11).

The more you learn to know and grow in your relationship with the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the better you will function and become all that God has intended you to be as His representative here on earth.

The Father is your security in life and that is the foundation for ministry. Jesus is the counsellor of your soul and gives you authority. The Holy Spirit strengthens your body and equips you for ministry.

If you have only Jesus' authority and the Holy Spirit's equipping, but no relationship with the Father, you will not last long in ministry, quickly becoming worn out. Jesus is our greatest example. First John 5:19 says that Jesus does not do anything on His own, but only that which He sees His Father doing. The Trinity is a mystery, and the fullness of it nobody

on earth completely understands. In this chapter I have only described the aspect that concerns our daily lives as Christians.

Philippians 2:13 says, "...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose". The Amplified Bible puts it this way: "[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energising and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure *and* satisfaction *and* delight." A commentary reads as follows: "He has not left us alone in our struggle to accomplish His will. He wants to walk beside us and live in us. He can both help us to obey Him and give us the power we need to accomplish His will. The secret to a changed life is to surrender the control to Him and allow Him to work in us."

 *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."* James 1:17

Chapter 11

See yourself as you really are

God has created us as individuals, and there are no two people that are the same. Apparently there are no two snowflakes the same either. What an awesome Creator we have!

God created you unique. The enemy would like us to be poor copies of someone else, and so he tempts us with numerous trends and models that we think we should try and be like. This is especially true amongst the youth, as various models portray an image which many copy. If we build our self-image on idols, friends or commercials, we are in trouble. The word "idol" comes from the Greek word meaning a graven image.

To add to all this, if you have been exposed to bullying and negative, degrading words about your looks or your abilities, it is easy to develop a distorted self-image. This does not at all agree with the original that God created. We need to forgive the people who have said those things to or about us. Ask God to release you from the power of those words about being too tall, short, thin, fat, stupid, crazy, or suchlike. Step out from under the curse of comparison and begin to see yourself as your Creator sees you. You have been created in His image!

Apart from the struggle on the human level with comparisons, jealousy, self-assertion and so on, there is another enemy to a healthy self-image. We call him the "enemy of our soul". He was one of the archangels, Lucifer, created by God. He was created as a very beautiful creature, possessing splendour and wisdom. You can read more about this in Ezekiel 28:14-17.

Lucifer became proud of his splendour and wanted to set himself above God. This led to his downfall and he took a third of the angels with him, having to leave their heavenly dwelling because of the choice they had made. However splendid Lucifer was in his official capacity as an archangel, God has made man to be of higher value than the angels. He has made us in His own image. Hebrews 1:13-14 says, "To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

Lucifer (Satan), who was stripped of his beauty and position, and his fallen angels (demons) are jealous of your higher standing, beauty and place within creation. That is why they use all possible resources to distort a healthy self-image and an understanding of your true value as a person. God has already given you the highest value. Let God's judgment be the standard, and do not let yourself be influenced by a demonic standard which is made to break down our understanding of man's true value.

See yourself through God's Word

Read the wonderful words in Psalm 139:13-18: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you."

Reflect on these verses and allow God's plan to take shape in your life, irrespective of people's opinions, what they have said or even thought. His eyes saw you before you were formed. He knew about you before your conception, before your parents even knew, and He already had a plan for your life. He does not love the planned child more than the unplanned one, and He is not a respecter of persons; that is, He does not respect one person any more or less than another.

Born out of wedlock

If you were born out of wedlock and not planned, you need to know that God has a special plan for your life as well, and you can be set free from the negative effect the circumstances may have had on you. What you need to do is the following:

- Forgive your biological parents.
- Stand in the gap for their sin and impurity.
- Ask God to deliver you from rejection and to heal you from the time

in the womb, from conception onward.

- Pray that all God has thought of and prepared for you will come to pass.

Psalm 139:14: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; . . . I know that full well." Read Zephaniah 3:17: "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

Psalm 8:3-6: "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet. . . ."

In Christ, this is your identity!

Do not compare yourself to what you see in others

Sometimes we look at other people who appear to be so happy. They seem to be successful at everything, they always have money and they seem very spiritual. However, you do not know what lies behind appearances. The following story is a good illustration (although I cannot guarantee its authenticity).

A priest, dressed in his priestly garb, ran out of petrol on a country road. He walked to a nearby farmhouse and asked if they had any petrol he could buy. They had some, but no suitable container, so they gave him the petrol in a chamber pot. While he was pouring this into the petrol tank of the car, another motorist drove past and commented, "Imagine having faith like that!".

"Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humor to console him for what he is." — Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Different countries tend to show different character traits. Certain

common characteristics and weaknesses can be recognised in one nation or people group, while another nation or people group will exhibit other characteristics. For example, the Swedes in general are both proud and have an inferiority complex which needs to be hidden at all costs. That is why they need to be just as capable as everyone else, and at the same time nobody should think himself or herself better than the next person. As Christians, we need to be aware of the curse of comparison, which can express itself along these lines: "I'm not a worse sinner than the next. I need to look good, so that nobody can see how terrible I actually feel, or how I have complicated my life." Arguments like this do not stand before God. Jesus challenged those who wanted to polish the exterior but were not as thorough about the inside. We cannot be someone showing an external righteousness, but being full of hypocrisy and unrighteousness within. See Matthew chapter 23.

*When I look at myself I get disheartened;
When I look at others I get confused;
When I look at Jesus I am transformed.*

Do not value yourself according to others' opinions

Do not look at yourself according to what other people say about you, but according to the Word of God. God's principles are the complete opposite of what the world thinks. First Corinthians 1:27-20: "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."

The most powerful example of this that I have seen is that of a woman I met in the States many years ago. She and her husband both suffered from cerebral palsy. One side of the husband's body was affected so that his leg and arm on that side did not function properly; he also had difficulty speaking. The wife had trouble speaking as well and her words came out with a hissing sound. Her face and her body were contorted and she was not a beauty to behold.

However, the couple loved Jesus and worked with Christian literature. She wrote brochures giving information on handicapped people, visited schools and spoke about CP sufferers. This lady was designated by a Christian weekly magazine in the States as "Christian Woman of the Year". They did not choose one of the beauty queens or TV stars, but one who was seen as nothing in the eyes of the world. This woman saw herself through God's Word and received her inner strength, beauty and power from its truth.

Speaking of physical disabilities...

We know that God can heal, and in these last days we see an outpouring of His healing power as never before. However, in this chapter we are focusing on a true self-image, not on physical healing. We need to know that we are not worthless in God's eyes before we are healed, and my point is that our self-image must be built on what God sees.

Like the couple above, I also choose to see myself through God's Word and according to His calling on my life instead of the way the world sees me, which is disabled. My assessment of a handicap is that many who have all their body parts, good looks, good intelligence and so on, can be more handicapped than those with physical disabilities. There are things like bitterness and fear of failure that can actually make them handicapped.

I am now a grandmother. Before my first grandchild was born, I told my daughter, "With my bad sight I won't be able to baby-sit, but I'll gladly hold the baby if someone is with me." My daughter was relieved that I had said this myself, as she had been thinking about the situation, but did not want to hurt me. She did not want me to baby-sit because of all the things that could go wrong and which I would not see. So we agreed even before he was born: no baby-sitting.

Reality became something else though, and soon I was the favourite baby-sitter. By the time he was only a few weeks old, my grandson accompanied me in a carrycot to services and Bible school teachings, and it worked wonderfully.

When he was ten months old my daughter went overseas for two weeks to complete her studies and write exams, and during that time I took 14 days' leave of absence to stay home with the baby. Imagine the grace that allowed me to delight in being a grandmother around the

clock — what a joy! Sometimes his jersey was back to front, but that is a trivial thing. The only big problem I had (at least, that I know of!) was when the feeding bottle teat ended up in his ear instead of his mouth. It is a good thing that there is no suction in our ears, otherwise there could have been greater damage! By the way, I also believe that a grandmother's love is more important than the exact amount of milk powder.

God made the impossible possible, and I was able to experience the fantastic joy of being an "active" grandmother. If we had held to the idea that it was impossible for me to take care of my grandson, we would have all missed this blessing. Do not decide beforehand what you can and cannot do. We humans have a much higher capacity than what we think at times — and especially if we count on God's help.

Use God's Word as your mirror, and it will give you strength in your soul.

*I am what God's Word says I am
I have what God's Word says I have
I can do what God's Word says I can do
All of God's promises belong to me
Yes, they belong to me.*

 "...You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." Psalm 139:13-14

Chapter 12

Shock experiences

I want to dedicate a few chapters to situations which are traumatic and often not caused by ourselves, such as accidents, violence and abuse. We call these shock experiences and the consequences of shock experiences. You can read this chapter with one of two attitudes: either that it is terrible that people go through such things and you feel bad just reading about it, or how fantastic it is that God can do so much, and that nothing is impossible for Him. I suggest you decide to be encouraged rather than depressed!

Consequences of a shock experience are what psychiatry refers to as traumatic stress disorder or post traumatic stress disorder. Most of us have at some point been involved in situations that have caused fear, phobias, anxiety or other negative emotions, but this area was almost unknown to me until I was tormented with fear after the car accident mentioned earlier. The phobia that developed concerning sitting in the right front seat of the car was totally illogical, but it robbed me of much strength and energy, and it was very embarrassing at times, only increasing over the years. Later, when I was set free from this phobia, a whole new world opened up for me in which to serve others.

We started to discover how easy it was for someone to be set free when specific prayer for specific experiences was applied. We have also learned the importance of praying in the aftermath of traumas, or even disasters that have happened in the community.

Some of the truths in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 can be applied here. "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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." A shock experience can become a stronghold from which God can set us free. Thought patterns apply to many areas, including reactions to a crisis or trauma. To take each thought captive to Christ, as the Word says, also applies to fear, phobias and other situations.

In the following three chapters I will share examples and testimonies concerning shock experiences and consequences to these, but first I would like to add some comments.

Dr. Britta Holmström shares about shock experiences:

"When people are exposed to something that is unexpected and difficult, horrible or tragic, they become shocked. This is a psychological reaction. It can even be called a psychological protection against a frightful reality which is forcing itself upon them. During the minutes, hours or days following a serious shock, reality is shut out as they are unable to accept the terrible event that has taken place.

"Many respond calmly and coherently outwardly, but under the surface there is chaos. They are actually not hearing what is taking place, and even if they are participating in a coherent conversation, they will most probably not remember much of the conversation except a few specific words, like: "broken . . . , leg . . . , dead . . . , disappeared." Sometimes you get a glimpse of the inner chaos when the shocked person responds completely irrationally: "I just need to do the ironing before I go to hospital."

"A person in shock needs to be able to talk a lot about him- or herself but cannot take in much information. The person might need help in making good decisions and in accomplishing them, too: "Now you are going to the hospital, and I will drive you there."

"A psychological shock affects the body as well. A person can experience heart palpitations and feel as though his heart will stop. Everything goes black before his eyes and he may faint; there could be pressure in his chest and he may feel as though he cannot breathe. His mouth goes dry, he might vomit, shiver, his legs might fold under him, and so on.

"As our body, soul and spirit are one, it is natural that our body reacts when our soul has experienced a trauma. The physical reactions are uncomfortable, but often not dangerous.

"If you find yourself with a person who has just seen, heard or experienced some trauma, take a moment to think and deal with it practically. Wrap the person up warmly, give something to drink, hold or hug the person. Do what comes naturally to you – hugging, holding his or her hand, or perhaps placing your hand on the person's shoulder.

"Show respect above all else. Someone in shock should not be left alone. Often the physical reactions do not last long, sometimes a few hours, or maybe days. At times it seems as if the person cannot get free from the condition the soul is in, or the crisis reaction is delayed for some reason, only to show up later in life in the form of various problems."

As a psychiatrist sees it

A good friend of mine was asked to give some input on this subject and wrote the following:

"There are both possibilities and limitations within psychiatry in the treatment of shock experiences. Examples of shock experiences are accidents, confrontations with death and broken relationships. The way a person reacts and deals with difficult situations depends on many differing aspects. Important aspects are background, foundational security, current life situations and the severity of the experience.

"Responses of fear when you feel threatened, grief at the loss of something, anger when you or a loved one's integrity has been challenged, are all normal reactions. However, you can get stuck following any crisis, for various reasons. Severe anxiety, depression, bitterness and phobias can also come about after a shock. Within different types of therapy, we try to help people by identifying their feelings and emotions and putting words to the thoughts that have been exposed. Together we try and find ways of helping the individuals to live with the situations in which they find themselves. With deep depression and severe anxiety, medication may be necessary.

"Unfortunately, in psychiatry and various other therapies we do not normally count on the power of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and prayer."

Traumatic incidents that ended well

Life-threatening situations can create lingering wounds, even though nothing actually happened. Here follow some examples of these kinds of situations, but what I especially want to point out is the documented change after prayer.

Anxiety after being trapped in an elevator

The narrow Polish forest road was edged with tall pine trees, making it just about impossible to see the sky. Our team was on a mission trip, but right now we were on our way to have a swim in the lake. However, one of the members began to get very anxious in the van, felt claustrophobic and had a panic attack. When we arrived at the lake I asked, "Have you ever been trapped somewhere?" The woman, a new Christian, related an experience that had happened 15 years previously.

She was working at a hospital, and was caught in a lift with three other people when it stopped between floors. They could only communicate over the intercom and were told that it would take 45 minutes before the serviceman could be there. While sitting on the floor in the elevator waiting, she was gripped with fear that the oxygen would run out before the serviceman arrived and she would die. Who would then take care of her daughter, she worried?

Eventually she and the others were released unharmed. However, she not only became fearful of elevators, but even felt claustrophobic in a vehicle if she could not see where she was going. It was an enclosed place like the elevator and she would feel as if she could not get air. Aeroplane flights were traumatic for her, although the family regularly went on holidays overseas. Before she became a Christian, she had handled the fearful situation by drinking alcohol.

At the lake we prayed a few minutes about her shock and the fear that had gripped her, then we went for a swim. Back in the car on the way home the woman rejoiced as all fear and anxiety was gone! Eight years have now since passed and she is still free from any panic attacks and all fear of elevators or enclosed places.

Nightmares in old age

A man in his seventies had worked on a large ship in his youth. One day he accidentally fell into the propeller shaft, which was full of oil, and was tumbling very close to the propeller under the water. Slipping and sliding in the oil he desperately tried to stay clear of the propeller, which threatened to cut him to pieces. Eventually he was rescued.

In the first years after the event, he did not think much about it, but the older he got the worse his nightmares became, where he was fighting to evade the propeller while in the shaft. He received prayer and the night-

mares disappeared, giving him a much more peaceful old age.

If you have had a traumatic experience, it is far better to receive prayer immediately than to leave it until you grow up or grow old and it creates problems later in life.

Lost at sea

A woman told us that her father went missing at sea during a very traumatic experience, when she was nine years old. He was a sport fisherman and had gone out from Gothenburg in his boat with his neighbour. They were to return the same day, but evening came and went and they were not back. The weather had changed and become foggy. The woman's mother had tried to convince the child and herself that the men would soon be home, but children sense an adult's anxieties very well, and can soon see through attempts at hiding them. The mother started crying with the neighbour's wife, thinking they would never again see their husbands. Fear gripped the little girl.

Thankfully, the Coast Guard found the men the following day, dehydrated but uninjured. The boat had drifted half way to Denmark, as their motor had broken down. Their story was on the front page of the newspaper that night, and everything seemed fine.

Many years later, when the woman's own boys went out and did not come home on time, the creeping, growing fear would rise within her. Often, it accelerated to the point where she found herself sitting and wondering how to word the death announcement and which hymns to sing at the funeral. Other times she would go out and look for them. One time her son left on his motorbike to go fishing. It got later and later, and he did not come home. Her relief was tremendous when she saw his headlights coming down the forest track where she had gone out looking for him. Nothing at all was wrong, and he could not understand her distress.

On another occasion her oldest son was working at a freshwater lake clearing away trees. The same fear came over her, but this time she could not go out and look for him, as she was bedridden with a dislocated vertebra. She later received prayer for her back and it was at this time the root to her fear was exposed and prayed over. Since then, fear of losing a loved one has never again taken hold of her in such a way.

Death of pets

Both children and adults can find it very difficult to lose a beloved pet. These experiences are also important to pray over. Here are some examples of what can happen.

"I have a lump in my throat!"

During a two-day seminar a 40-year-old man told me he had a permanent lump in his throat and wanted me to pray for it.

This was the first time that I had heard about this kind of trouble, and I was not quite sure how to pray. I could hardly recommend that he cough and see if it would loosen. Since then I have heard that there is a medical diagnosis for this condition, called "globus". The man said that he had travelled extensively with a preacher who thought that it was probably connected to suppressed grief, but he himself could not think of any such experience in his life. He had never lost a loved one. I suggested that we wait until the next day, and the man prepared to take us to our train home.

Often the Lord speaks to me by writing His message on the inside of my eyelids. Suddenly, I could see it clearly, but shook my head a number of times. Surely the lump in his throat was not about a cat? But the words remained there on my eyelids until I asked him, "Does this have anything to do with a cat?" "Yes", he responded immediately, and at that moment the feeling of the lump in his throat became almost suffocating. It usually happens that a manifestation increases when you are right.

He told us that when he was 13 years old his favourite cat had been caught in the harvesting machine and lost three legs. It was decided that it was his job to kill the cat, as he was big enough to do it. Of course he could not cry over his cat, so he just "put the lid" on the experience and suppressed his feelings. Now the Holy Spirit revealed that this was the grief he had not dealt with.

After we prayed, the feeling of the lump in his throat totally disappeared.

Favourite pig slaughtered

In one meeting a woman responded to a word of knowledge about something that happened to a pig. She related that when she was 10

years old, she loved their pig, which they co-owned with their neighbours. Sometimes it even shared her lunch sandwiches. But the day came when it was time to slaughter the pig. She played truant from school and hid behind the bushes on the hillside to watch. The pig squealed when the stomach was cut open; from her hiding place the girl, terrified, saw the blood and guts burst out. Since that day she had not been able to eat meat, and her three sons grew up never eating meat.

After prayer, both the horror of this memory and her dislike of meat, especially pork, disappeared. Straight after the service she bought a hotdog and it tasted good! That was 45 years after the trauma with the pig. Naturally after so long, her body copes better with other food, but the disgust of meat is gone. In fact, it is now 10 years since we prayed and when I called her recently, she was just grilling some pork chops.

Nothing to live for when the dog died

Another woman, although a Swede, had lived most of her life outside Sweden, and had recently returned. Her son had not come back with her, but had given his mother a dog, which became her constant companion.

However, she had not yet had time to make any new friends when a terrible thing happened — her dog was run over and died. Her whole world seemed to collapse and she felt that there was nothing left to live for.

Through a Christian family she came into contact with our church. We met with her, she received deliverance from her heartache over the shock of her dog's death, and all the darkness that came with that disappeared. The end result was that she was born again! It is worth noting that you do not need to be a Christian to receive healing through prayer. I have seen many unsaved people healed, and one thing is for sure, it is easy to speak to them about Jesus once they are healed! This lady later got another lovely dog.

Animals can also be healed!

After these sad incidents of animals and pets dying, I would like to tell you some testimonies about how God has healed a number of pets in answer to prayer.

I was working as a school evangelist in a southern province of Swe-

den, when a girl's horse became very sick. The veterinarian visited, but the animal continued to remain lying on the ground. The girl who owned the horse had recently become a Christian, and so she confidently laid her hands on the horse and prayed. Soon the horse got to his feet completely well. Hallelujah!

Another time, I was at a farm for a meeting. A cow was paralysed after giving birth and had been lying helpless for two days. The vet had come four times already, but could do no more. We decided to pray over a cloth which we then sent out to the barn to be laid on the cow. Before the meeting was over, the cow was up again as if nothing had happened.

Fears

Most of us have been frightened at some point in our lives, and for many, the fright has resulted in fear and phobias. Snakes, dogs, bees and wasps, spiders and elevators are the most common causes of fears that turn our lives upside down.

Fear of dogs

A lady pastor had problems in her ministry when she needed to visit her parish members at home. If they had a dog, they had to lock it up in another room because of her terrible fear of dogs, which gave her heart palpitations when they came near her.

Her mother had told her that when she was a little girl, the neighbour's dog had barked at her and she had been found, screaming and paralysed with fear, in front of the barking dog.

This was not something that she herself remembered, but during a time of ministry she requested prayer for her fear. We prayed, and she saw herself as a little girl, gaily coming down the stairs with the rubbish she was taking out. She walked past the neighbour's dog kennel and called the dog as she did so. In her vision, she then saw a being whom she perceived to be Jesus standing right where the dog should have been rushing towards her. He said to her, "Don't be afraid, I am here."

We prayed according to the vision she had seen, and all her fear left her. This is 14 years ago now, and in place of the old fear she now has a great love for dogs, and they respond by loving her as well!

Fear of travelling by train

A big crane had come to a standstill right on a railway crossing where there were no safety booms. A train came, and just before the collision the train driver managed to run toward the back of the train and avoid being hurt. However, the crane swung around from the impact of the collision, and crashed into a window of one of the compartments where a mother and her nine-year-old boy were sitting. Although they were not injured, the experience left the boy fearful of travelling by train.

A few years later the mother, a believer, prayed about this together with another Christian. The boy was not present, but his fear left at that moment. The mother did not have a car so the boy had to take the train when he visited his father once a month. Now he was even happy to travel on his own!

The unborn and the newborn child

A woman wanted help in the area of fear. Her mother had told her that as a newborn baby she had had a lot of trouble with cramps. With her permission I contacted her mother and asked what had happened during the pregnancy.

It transpired that her father had been a great practical joker. His less pleasant pranks involved rigging up tape recorders in the house which would play eerie sounds when someone opened a door. This had scared her mother many times. She had also been involved in a near accident in a small plane, when it almost crashed. The delivery of the baby had been very difficult and was in fact a life-and-death struggle.

Together with the young woman, we later prayed about these incidents, which she herself had not been aware of before, and asked the Lord to lay a foundational security in her life. Some years later she recounted what she had experienced at the time we had prayed. She had felt like a newborn lying in the big hand of God, feeling totally secure and safe. From that moment, the fear was gone.

Prayer for children

It is appropriate to pray for children of all ages who have experienced frightening situations, and also for an unborn baby if the mother was affected in some negative way. This is good primary healthcare and better

than waiting until bigger problems emerge later in life, as we have seen.

In fact, praying for children and their experiences is just as important as teaching them to brush their teeth. Prayer and brushing teeth are both preventative in their purpose. We all know that some people are born with strong teeth and never seem to get any cavities in spite of not brushing properly and eating incorrectly, while others are prone to cavities in spite of good dental hygiene. Individuals also respond differently in various situations of life. Some seem to handle a lot, while others cannot cope with much. Pray for your children as a natural way of life, without making a big deal of it. This is healthcare for the soul.

Before we go any further, I would like to tell you a happy story. When our daughter was five years old and had lived in Sweden for three years, she spoke only Swedish. She understood English but somehow there was a block and she refused to speak it. Her Dad had been away travelling for a while, and when he came home and knocked on the door, she opened it. She was so happily surprised, that without thinking she started speaking to him in English. The block was gone and from that day on she spoke English almost fluently.

Abandonment, rejection and loneliness

When children need to stay in hospital, close contact with relatives is very important. Today we are aware of this, but elderly and middle-aged people of today have many frightening stories of times they spent in hospital as children and felt alone and abandoned. As adults this can manifest as rejection, and a feeling of not being quite good enough.

Rejection can also set in when younger children are separated from their parents for various reasons, and even similar kinds of experiences happening to adults can result in the same feelings. Thankfully, there is healing for situations like this. God can fill the emptiness, and all feelings of abandonment, rejection and loneliness can be removed!

Alone at the children's hospital

A woman who had just heard the teaching on shock experiences was praising the Lord with raised hands during a time of worship when suddenly her palms and the sides of her hands started itching. She couldn't understand what it was and asked God to show her. She felt that God

was saying to her that he was removing the roots of loneliness which had plagued her so long.

Then she remembered a very unpleasant incident in her childhood. At the age of nine she and her class took an outing to an amusement park. On the way there, they had climbed a mountain close by and she had caught her hand on something sharp, cutting her palm quite badly. When the classmates continued on to the amusement park, she was left alone in the emergency rooms at the hospital to have 16 stitches in her hand.

This shock became a stronghold of loneliness in her life. Now, 40 years later, God's presence came during a praise and worship service, she experienced once again the feeling of stitches in her hand, and God said to her, "Now I am healing your soul".

Deserted

I was invited to another town where I taught on repentance and forgiveness, followed by a time of ministry. On a return visit, I asked the leadership if they had noticed any changes in the people to whom I had ministered. They then mentioned a woman whose whole physical bearing had changed and who was radiant.

During the service I had challenged the listeners to ask the Holy Spirit to point out incidents in their lives which could be the root to feelings of abandonment. As this woman was sitting in the pew, she had been reminded that as a six-year-old child she had spent many months at a convalescent home in another country as she had suffered from rheumatic fever. This meant that she was separated from her parents for months at a time and was often subjected to severe discipline. When she was 19, she became pregnant, and the young father would have nothing to do with the child. As a single mother, she moved to Sweden and later married. After several years of marriage she got divorced and was once again a single mother with two small children.

After repenting of her own sin and expressing forgiveness to others involved in these crises in her life, she received ministry concerning the shocks and their consequences, and experienced complete restoration. Much suppressed despair and crying left her and now the whole church could see a remarkable change in her life!

Narrow escapes from water

Some of the most severe shocks and their consequences come when in some way a person has been confronted with death. One of the most common is close escapes from drowning. It is not unusual to be afraid of water after nearly drowning, but other consequences can also arise which are nearly impossible to figure out.

Four-year-old falls into a lake

a conference, a word of knowledge came that someone had experienced a narrow escape from drowning. The meeting had been going for some hours already and the lady concerned was last in the queue. We decided to wait until the next day to have more time to pray with her.

When we did so, the lady said it was only a faint memory, but as the word related to her, she thought it wise to receive prayer. Only later did we see how necessary that had been.

As a four-year-old she had fallen into the lake when no one was nearby, had lost consciousness and sunk. When she had come up again and was floating face down in the water, a grown-up had come by and seen her. Resuscitation was successful and she remembers: "While I was unconscious I knew that I was on my way to heaven, and everything was shining and bright. Because of this wonderful memory I'm not afraid of death."

We prayed about the details concerning the near drowning, asking the Lord to remove the painful memories and the shock of not being able to get air. For a few seconds she began gasping for breath and then she was quiet.

She then told us that as an adult she had experienced a lot of anxiety, but could not understand where it came from. She had a good job, a lovely family and life was generally good, yet for long periods she had had to be in psychiatric care, even including electroshock therapy.

After we prayed about this close encounter and broke the consequences of the experience, she told us that all anxiety was gone. After many years of being off work sick, she could return to her job, which she has now enjoyed for 13 years.

Five-year-old trapped on the seabed

A woman requested prayer after having listened to the teaching on shock and its effects. She had nearly drowned as a five-year-old when she dived under the water to look at the seaweed. Her foot had got caught in the roots and she could not come up for air until she finally managed to get herself free. In spite of this, she was not fearful of swimming or diving, but felt it would be good to be prayed for just in case it still affected her in some way.

It was some years before I met her again, and it was then that she told me the result of the prayer. She had four boys, the oldest of whom was 12 when we had prayed. She had never dared let them play out of her sight, always fearful that something might happen. However, when she had come home from the service the evening we had prayed, her husband had commented, "It's nearly nine o'clock! I wonder where the boys are?" She had replied, "Out playing somewhere. They'll come in when they're finished playing." Her husband, amazed, asked, "What are you saying?" The woman then realised that her unnatural concern for the boys was gone!

"When as a child I nearly drowned without anyone seeing me," she said, "I became fearful of accidents. As a parent, I felt forced to watch over my children constantly, but now both the boys and I are very happy that it's over."

Grandma could not swim

A 35-year-old woman was given sick leave from her job for a lengthy period because of exhaustion. She normally worked with children at a school, and came to us to get help.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit we traced the root cause of this tiredness. As a six-year-old she was to go out in a rowboat with her grandmother. It was docked at the jetty in deep water. She jumped into the boat first, but then was not able to keep it close to the jetty. Her grandma tried to step into the boat but missed it, fell into the water and, as she could not swim, went under time and again. At last the little girl, with the help of an oar, managed to hold the grandmother's head above water. When she had regained her breath, her grandma could help herself out of the water.

From the terrible guilt the six-year-old girl felt, she developed an ex-

aggerated sense of responsibility for others and their safety. Now her job as an adult was the responsibility for all the security systems at the school where she worked, and the safety of the 200 students. This continual watchfulness, along with the sense of responsibility she already felt, was too much for her.

Now, the long-ago childhood crisis was dealt with by God's power and she could at last relax. Today she is still working with many children, has a healthy sense of responsibility and safety awareness and has more than enough strength to cope with it!

Ministries limited because of phobias

Through the years I have seen that even great men of God can be tormented in various ways and this, of course, affects their ministry.

For many years I worked closely with a preacher who had a dynamic healing ministry and a prophetic anointing with incredible precision. Principalities and powers did not seem to scare him, but if a mouse showed up, there was complete panic. All those working with him were made aware of his fear of mice. We were not even allowed to joke about it. One day I showed him a little stuffed toy mouse. I should not have done that. It was not funny. If this had happened today, I would have known how to help him get free.

Some men and women of God limit their ministry by refusing to travel to other countries. They may have a fear of snakes, spiders, bugs or other animals. Or they fear travelling by plane and so never accomplish their mission. But there is help to get free from all these limitations and serve Christ fully.

Mankind is wonderful, with an enormous variety of reactions in different situations, sometimes with funny consequences. When my brother-in-law was about to become a father for the first time, he was nervous and tense, as are many men in that situation. When the day came, would he make it to the hospital in time?

At last the moment arrived. He was woken up in the middle of the night by his wife, and with lightning speed he jumped out of bed, ran to the car, started it and drove off. He was in a great rush. On the way to

the hospital, he discovered to his amazement that he had left both his wife and his trousers at home!

Words that shock

As we have learned, there are many areas which can cause a crisis in our lives. One area I would like to cover here is words. Harsh, cutting words, unexpected blow-ups, accusations, defamation and invectives, etc., can have the effect of a shock. You forgive 100 times, but cannot cope with seeing the person because of a fear of it happening again. Testimonies from my own and others' lives confirm that you can be set free from the hurt of such words.

Shock of injustice

An injustice can come as a shock. Reactions depend on how sensitive we are, what we have experienced earlier in life and how we are feeling at the moment. Sometimes people tell me that they cannot forgive injustices to which they have been subjected. Many times specific prayer is needed to get over the incident so that the bitterness can be released.

The shock of cultural differences

When going to another country a person can suffer from culture shock. It is said that the risk is greater when the cultures are similar, as people do not expect and are therefore not prepared for the differences. Feelings of rejection, loneliness and depression can be symptoms of culture shock.

How to pray for healing from a shock

When a person has experienced a shock, it is important for him or her to be able to talk about it a lot. If this does not happen, there is the risk that the emotions from the traumas will get locked inside. This is the reason why crisis centres are opened following disasters and traumas on a national level.

If you are closely involved with such a situation, you need to allow the person to talk about what has happened, especially within the first three days following the event. Remember that the person suffering from shock does not take in so much of what is being said, but rather has a need to

express what has been experienced.

As soon as possible after the incident, it is important to go back into a similar situation, in order to gain victory over the fear that can otherwise set in. This could mean driving again after a car accident, or taking a ride in an elevator after being stuck in one, or meeting the person who has subjected you to ridicule or an angry outburst. This stops the avalanche of fear that could start overwhelming you.

Pray also straight after the accident or incident. If the person is not quite conscious, or perhaps dazed because of the shock, he or she should receive ministry again in a few days.

Psalms 107 speaks about the children of Israel experiencing God's help in various ways. One of these situations is described in verses 26-30. Although it is about a storm at sea, it could also be a description of feelings after a shock. Your emotions go up and down and you may be filled with anxiety and illogical thoughts. "They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven."

When it comes to prayer, your faith in God is more important than whether you say and do the right things. Here is an amazing testimony from the book, "To Heal the Sick", by Charles and Frances Hunter. A woman was suffering with advanced cancer, and some of her friends read the passage in James 5:14: "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord". The friends started believing that the woman could be healed. They were not quite sure how this would happen, but purchased a four-litre bottle of cooking oil with which to anoint her, just as the Word said. They poured the whole bottle of oil over her in her bed. They did a crazy thing, but God was there and healed her. Then off she went to the shower! Healing has nothing to do with technique or methods, but is operational through our faith in God's will and our ability to receive.

Another lady who was sick read in the same verse that you should call on the elders in the church. She had not had any teaching on James

5:14, but accepted it completely. She phoned the local home for the elderly and invited the two oldest men to her house. One was 95 and the other 97, and both were very happy to be invited out for the afternoon. This must have been a very different visit for them. When, at her request, they anointed her with oil, she was healed.

Tips on how to pray for recent or past shock experiences:

- Submit yourself to the Holy Spirit and His anointing. Use common sense in the various details.
- If there are any areas or situations where reconciliation is necessary, start with that. Deliverance and healing are released through reconciliation.
- Pray that the Lord will cut all ties in the soul to the various details of the incident.
- Pray that the Lord will nullify painful memories of what was seen, heard and felt, from the incident.
- Pray that everything that has been repressed and held back will be released and removed from the subconscious.
- Speak to the shock to be rendered powerless in the name of Jesus.
- Command all consequences to leave: fear, anxiety, phobias, the spirit of death, or whatever else is applicable.
- Pray for healing within the soul, and then thank the Lord in faith for what He has done.

Often the person does not feel anything particular during the prayer, but that is not important. The results will speak for themselves. Pray for the protection of the blood of Jesus over that person. Remember that it is not a technique in itself that gives results. Pray and believe that God does the work — it is only He who can bring about change.

Various means of deliverance

When God heals and delivers, He does not necessarily follow a particular pattern. After understanding the cause of a certain fear in my own life, which I had felt as long as I can remember, I asked Jesus to take it away. The person I had hoped would pray for me was on a trip and I got impatient so, alone at home, I prayed a short prayer and immediately felt the fear lift off me. Several times since then I have been in

situations where the fear would have manifested, but it is totally gone!

A man told us that during his teenage years he had become deeply involved in the occult. When he was 18 years old he was in bed with a high fever. He had terrible visions and nightmares of chickens. The hens, with burning wings, flew up from an abyss in the ground and tried to get in through his window to harm him.

After this experience and the hallucinations from the fever, he could not be near hens without breaking into a cold sweat and shaking all over. The fear tormented him for many years. At the age of 42 he became a Christian, and when he was baptised, he had a very real deliverance in the baptismal pool. Afterwards he found out exactly from what he had been delivered.

He had a family and they owned a little farm. His wife loved hens, but it was unthinkable to even talk about getting some, so the chicken coop was empty. One day while out, she walked past a hen house and felt the Lord ask her if she would like some chickens. She said she really would, but could not even speak about it to her husband.

The next day her husband asked her if they should get some chickens. She did not miss her opportunity, and off they went to get some. It was then that the husband realised he was no longer scared of them, and they brought home ten beautiful breeding hens.

 *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete."*
2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Chapter 13

Death and personal failure

Death, accidental and natural

After the death of someone close, a normal time of bereavement follows, which takes about a year. In that time you go through all the seasons, celebrations and special occasions which remind you of that person. It is natural to remember what it was like when your loved one was alive and suddenly you find yourself crying. That is completely normal; let the tears come! On the other hand, a shock can prevent you from mourning normally, or cause you to remain stuck on a small detail of the event.

For example, we prayed for a woman who many years previously had lost her son in a car accident. She had been informed by a telephone call, and still became fearful whenever she heard the phone ring, apprehensive that it could be another death notification.

The Lord can remove these traps of fear and anxiety from you.

Bicycle accident

"Bicycle accident!" This came as a word of knowledge at an evening service during a weekend of meetings. A woman responded, relating how her husband had been run over while cycling, and as a result died some time later.

Since then, she had been trapped in a great fear of cycling accidents, and would not let her 12-year-old daughter ride her bicycle. Maybe the same thing would happen to her. We broke the shock of what had happened and told the fear to leave. Two days later she testified in the service: "The fear is gone! Yesterday I let my daughter ride her bike all day. In the beginning she came in every five minutes to see if I was OK and I was!"

Freed to mourn after 25 years

A woman woke up in the middle of the night with two large men bending over her – one with a syringe in his hand. Coming so suddenly

out of a deep sleep, she was shocked and unable at first even to recognise them as her husband and their friend the family doctor. The two shaken men then broke the terrible news that her father had just died in a car accident, and the doctor was going to give her a sedative as she was in the advanced stages of pregnancy. All this was too much for her. Her emotions simply cut off and from then on she could not cry. Twenty-five years later she received help through prayer, and for the first time she could mourn her father's death.

Brother died

After the shocking news of his younger brother's death in a car accident just one week before his wedding, a man said, "I'm never going to care about another person again, because it hurts too much when they die!" The result was many years of a paralysed emotional life, suicidal thoughts and escapes into alcohol.

Eventually, the man became a Christian and God could start changing him. We had the opportunity to pray that his cut-off emotions would start to function again. He then experienced what so many others do: God allowed one emotion at a time. In this way the person has time to come to terms with each emotion; there would be chaos on the inside if everything started up at once.

Today this man has a loving and warm heart for those around him.

Psychologically bound to an accident site

During a conversation with a man about the problem he had, he explained that he could not drive past a certain place outside his town without feeling terrible. The reason for this was that his brother had earlier driven while very drunk and caused an accident at that very place. A mother had been walking across the road with her daughter and the brother had run them over. The mother died and the daughter was seriously injured. The car ran into a rock face, but his brother survived.

It was understandable that this man felt bad when he drove past the site of his brother's accident. As we prayed about the situation, we broke the shock and cut all wrong soul connections to the place. The man was set free and is no longer plagued by the memories when he drives past the site.

Inadequate as a care-giver

A woman worked as an assistant to a severely handicapped girl for 18 months. The assistant grew very close to the girl and her family, and enjoyed her job tremendously. However, during this time, the seven-year-old girl developed mentally, but not physically as she should have, and eventually she died.

All suffered a time of great sorrow. The assistant carried on supporting the family during this time and helped with funeral arrangements. Later, when she was about to start a new job with another child, she felt an overwhelming heaviness. She found herself continually tired, her body felt battered and her back could not cope with the physical requirements, so she was given sick leave for a period. Even after that, while normally a person who liked being on the go all the time, she had no joy in her work and no creativity or initiative. Everything seemed to be a burden.

Some months after the death of the little girl, her parents became Christians and joined the same church as the assistant. This should have lifted all the heaviness from her, but it was a year later, when the mother went forward for prayer in a meeting, that the assistant realised that she also needed prayer for this heaviness related to the girl's death.

The counsellor who prayed for her received the words "guilt and inadequacy". The assistant responded immediately to those words, and it became obvious that the plagued emotions surrounding the circumstances had left her. New energy, job satisfaction and inspiration filled her, and the whole church could see that a change had taken place!

The grief process

Grief is normal after the death of a family member, a divorce, miscarriage, amputation or loss of the use of a limb, a friend leaving, etc.. Whatever the loss, it is important to allow yourself to grieve. Many try to be "strong" and cut off their emotions. They quickly replace the loss with something else so that they do not need to think about the situation and feel the pain. Emptiness can be filled with hectic activity, new relationships, alcohol or pills.

Some grieving is more complicated than others. Many years ago, a non-Christian friend went through a divorce and then in her second

marriage she was widowed. Both families had children and she became a single mother. She said that the death of her second husband was easier to bear. One's feelings are left in peace and no other person is involved. The community offers support and sympathy. In a divorce, people choose sides for or against, and both friends and relatives distance themselves to various degrees. If there are common children, there is an ongoing connection and possibly confrontations. This grief takes much longer to work through.

The first part of the grieving process involves feelings of anger, despair, abandonment and sometimes guilt for things that you would have liked to do differently, events you could have prevented or words you should or should not have said. You can also condemn yourself for not having prayed or believed enough for the situation.

If you who have not experienced this grief process, I would like to explain the next phase. Life carries on and your thoughts are no longer filled with what happened. Then suddenly, you see or experience something that reminds you of what happened and the tears come. That is completely normal. You do not plan to sit a while and grieve; it comes spontaneously and it is healthy.

When someone is sick for a long time, the grieving process of loved ones begins during that period. My mother suffered severe dementia during the last ten years of her life. When she went home to the Lord, I felt a lightness and joy that she was well at last and was re-united with Dad and others who had gone before.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted". The Living Bible translates the same verse this way: "Those who mourn are fortunate! For they shall be comforted." Instead of thinking of yourself as strong, fleeing from, numbing, denying or suppressing your grief, you will feel better sooner if you allow the feelings and release the tears when they come. When you as a Christian let yourself grieve, you can receive comfort from the Lord, whether it concerns death, divorce, loss of a friend or any other circumstance causing sorrow. God can fill the emptiness with His comforting presence.

The beginning of chapter 61 in Isaiah includes a prophetic word about Jesus and His ministry: "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me...to comfort all who mourn, and

provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."

Emotional healing after family trauma

There were many children, as well as adults, that were traumatised by what they had gone through during ethnic cleansing in a central African country. One of the co-workers at a counselling centre gave twenty children a large piece of paper with some coloured markers and asked them to draw a picture. Every one of those pictures depicted a child hiding behind a bush or a house watching someone being killed. All of the pictures showed blood. This posed a major problem, as the pastors there were not equipped to deal with such trauma. There was a little boy in one of the camps who was eight or nine years old and did not speak at all for eight months. In fact, everyone thought he was mute. After eight months he began speaking, and those that were there realised his silence was because he was so traumatised. The need for trauma counselling in this African country was enormous.

A four-day seminar in trauma counselling was organised and approximately 48 pastors from several denominations attended. One of the teachers mentioned that even those who were attending the seminar had closed some areas of their heart because of the pain of seeing a loved one killed, or perhaps even being involved in the killing themselves. He explained that everything that happens to us is filtered through our hearts and because they had closed the doors to that area of their heart, there would be no healing.

The first step would be to open the door, with Jesus standing at their side so that they could see what had happened through His eyes. He asked how many would be willing to open the door if Jesus were standing with them? All around the room, there were heavy sobs as they raised their hands. They were instructed to approach the door in their minds, open the door, realising that Jesus was with them. Again, there was sobbing. For twenty to thirty minutes, no one said a word, there was just weeping. People hugged each other, crying.

After half an hour, the teacher asked, "Is there anyone who wants to share something?" A tall African man stood up. "They took my 19-year-old brother and my 16-year-old sister," he said, "and threw them into a

pit latrine to drown in the sewage. If they had shot them and then thrown them in, in my mind that would have been easier to accept. However, when I saw that situation again through the eyes of Jesus I saw my 19-year-old brother crying out to Jesus for salvation. He had been very hard, and was not at all interested in spiritual matters. I thank God that they threw my brother into the pit latrine alive because now I know that both my brother and sister are with Jesus in heaven."

Personal failure

Personal failure can make it harder to get started again. This can, for example, be in such areas as studies, failures at work, unemployment, or broken relationships. Rejection, condemnation, shame, or fear of failure can paralyse your capabilities.

Feelings of failure due to unemployment

A man in his fifties had grown up with a mother who had impressed upon him that he must always work and take care of himself. He learnt that one should never accept help from the community. When the man, after 30 years of employment, was informed that he needed to receive unemployment compensation for a period for the first time in his life, everything fell apart for him. He sank into a spiritual and emotional darkness, and only after six months could he see what had happened and ask for prayer. After he had spent some time in prayer and fasting it became very clear to him what the real reason for the depression was. He stated, "I'm not giving up until this has been broken, because I can't live like this".

He realised that because of his upbringing, his unemployment and the forced acceptance of the unemployment benefit were a catastrophe to him. He had been totally shocked when he had received notice of his job termination. This led to a paralysis of the soul and his emotions were completely cut off. He also had difficulty with the person who had given him the notice, as the man was also a good friend.

After only a few minutes of prayer the situation changed. The paralysis the event had caused, as well as the emotional block and spiritual darkness, had to surrender to the power of God! Like the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, he felt as if life had started over again and was bursting into bloom!

Speaking of failure, this could really affect a mother and her confidence

Johnny and his family were visiting at Grandma's house for Sunday lunch. When little Johnny received his plate he started eating right away.

"Johnny, wait until we say our prayer."

"I don't have to," the boy replied.

"Of course you do," his mother insisted. "We say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Johnny explained. "But this is Grandma's house, and she knows how to cook!"

 *"You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever."*
Psalm 30:11-12

Chapter 14

Burn-out

Today it is becoming increasingly common for people to suffer from burn-out. One experiences feelings of inadequacy and a lack of ability to cope with life's demands. According to 2 Timothy 3:1, great stress and trouble are a sign of the last days: "But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]." Without sounding as if I have all the answers, I would like to include some simple advice, both from my own and other people's lives. Burn-out often comes about when someone's physical and emotional resources are low because of too much work, extreme circumstances like sickness, or some kind of draining situation. In this weakened condition, a stressful situation, a failure, or even a conflict involving harsh words, can become a trigger factor, the straw that breaks the camel's back.

The trigger event gets caught in the mind and becomes like an old gramophone record stuck in a groove. Over and over again the event runs back through the thoughts. You may feel as if there is a hole in you where all the energy leaks out, and neither rest nor sleep makes any difference. When you return to the same place where the stress first took place, or another similar situation, the symptoms, such as dizziness and weakness, often return.

After having been in such a situation myself a few times in my life, I have now learnt to deal with the trigger factor quickly, and I recover before anyone even knows what has happened.

Consequences of moving house

I would like to share from my own earlier experience here. During a very difficult house move once, I collapsed and it took me many months to recover. For a number of years after that, every time I saw moving boxes, a feeling of weakness and exhaustion would well up within me. When the family was once again in the process of moving apartments, I felt the exhaustion rise up just at the thought of collecting boxes, and during the move I actually went away. However, I soon realised that

there was a connection between the tiredness and the boxes, so then I requested prayer. Some time later, I almost single-handedly completed a move for a friend, and it was only afterwards that I realised this would not have been possible before!

After any psychological stress it is important to break the soul ties to a place, circumstances, words, people, etc.; otherwise similar situations will trigger the same symptoms in the future, as they had done with me.

Alone and abandoned

Another traumatic experience in my own life occurred recently. I was to preach in a small city in the central part of Sweden. I had told the people accompanying me that I would like to take a walk for a few minutes before breakfast that Sunday morning. What happened next had never happened to me before – I lost my way! Despite having travelled around the world on my own, as well as living in cities with millions of inhabitants, I had never before got lost. I was concentrating on my sermon and had not noticed that I had crossed over the railway line running close to where we were staying. For the next hour I walked up and down the streets looking for the house of our hosts and the car in which we had travelled. A number of times I turned back at the railway crossing, only 50 metres from the house where we were staying. There was no one on the street, and I did not know the address or remember the name of the people with whom we were staying.

It was a frosty morning and I was not dressed to be outside for so long. I was shivering with cold and began to feel very desperate. Thirty minutes before the service was to start I was found! Somewhat delayed, we sat down on the front pew in church. I was still shaking and could not stop crying inside. Eventually the Holy Spirit managed to arrest my soul and the service went well. Everything was fine again, or so I thought.

The next days were puzzling. Thoughts that had little to do with reality kept running through my mind. "I'm all alone, there's nobody to help me," I thought. "I have to handle everything on my own and I can hardly do a thing!" I had no energy, and managed to do very little; I slept a lot but was just as tired when I woke up.

After three days the Lord spoke to me. The shock of being lost had left its marks on my soul. When I had felt alone and abandoned while

trying to find my way, a completely wrong thought had taken hold of me, repeating continually that I was alone, abandoned and had to manage on my own, both at work and at home. That is why my energy was gone. However, after prayer the results of the shock completely disappeared and immediately my normal strength returned.

The "evangelical nervous system"

Many years ago I produced a book dealing mainly with healing of the spirit, soul and body. Included in this book is an article written by a doctor of theology, Erik Ewalds. He is with the Lord now, but worked for many years as a hospital chaplain in Finland and also wrote many books and articles on counselling. I would like to quote an English translation of an article of his, below.

"I often speak about the "evangelical nervous system". We have two large nervous systems in our body. The central nervous system enables me to stand and speak and gesticulate, while the autonomic nervous system keeps my heart pumping, my breathing regular and automatic, and my body temperature reasonably stable. The autonomic nervous system is made up of two sections – the sympathetic and the parasympathetic.

"The sympathetic hormone is called adrenaline. It is a stress hormone – in both a positive and negative sense. It helps me when I am straining to achieve something, but can also cause wear and tear and stress disorders if it carries on for too long. In the West we literally lead an adrenaline-filled life. We live in an extremely competitive society. Concepts such as team work and fellowship – actually everything that the Gospel stands for – are to a great extent unknown. That is why many of the eastern meditation religions have come here – because we live under such legalistic pressure. We must achieve something. When people hear the Christian teachings, many still experience it as something else to achieve. "I am so stressed, I am so pressured and busy. How can you expect me to have time over to commit to yet another thing?"

"It is more or less the same as saying, "I am so dead tired that I cannot lie down and rest. I am so incredibly hungry but I do not have time to sit down and eat now." This is the way we live in the West. We have chased ourselves into this standard of living, and it has become a god to us. We

run into this furnace of aggressive stress disorders and psychosomatic illnesses, anxiety and hopelessness. We buy medication worth millions to repair what we have brought about by unwise lifestyles and wrong attitudes to life.

"The parasympathetic hormone is called acetylcholine, which enables us to relax, rest and sleep. A physician once mentioned to me that if the body no longer produced this important hormone, death would soon come. The parasympathetic nervous system is also responsible for intuition and creativity. In other words, I cannot be a creative person if I am not restful.

"Maybe Jesus would have taught this way today if we re-formulate the verse in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all you who have adrenaline filled blood, and I will give you parasympathetic healing rest."

"There was a lady in the States who had flown on a plane for the first time. When asked how it was she replied, "I didn't dare sit with my full weight". She felt compelled to carry the full weight of the plane. How are we doing? Do we need to carry our churches or can we sit with our full weight in the pew? Relax and allow your full weight to rest against the pew. It will hold.

"This is what complete surrender looks like from a spiritual point of view. It means that I let go of my grip, my activity, and my legalistic ways of trying to save myself. Instead, I need to commit the whole lot to God, because He has already completed it.

"When we speak about healing we also have, in addition to prayer, counselling available. It manifests its genuineness in the fact that it heals. The secret to the healing is that the parasympathetic nervous system helps with restoration and healing. I usually tell doctors that they can do what they like, but if they are not able to get the patient to parasympathetic rest, then they will fail anyway. Nobody has contradicted me yet.

"You also know that when a person accepts the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as in being filled with the Holy Spirit for his equipping, he does not accomplish that through an adrenaline filled dash at the gates of heaven. It can only happen when he has surrendered himself completely to the parasympathetic rest and God's grace.

"The parasympathetic regulates the function of the endocrine system (lymph glands), which are the body's drainage system. All the dross or

slag, poisons, and all that achievement has produced, is drained from the body so that we can function.

"Maybe now we can understand why God has instituted the life rhythm between night and day in our lives. The parasympathetic nervous system needs time to complete its function. It cannot do it in no time. That is why we need to rest and relax, and respect life's laws – body, soul and spirit laws. Our immune system is regulated by the same nervous system. That is why sanctified and committed Christians could walk among the leper colonies for many years without being contaminated. They had a very good immune system.

"This is the way our Lord works. He has built in an "evangelical nervous system" in our bodies that we need to learn how to develop and make use of. That is why it is a matter of surrendering oneself. It becomes an experience of grace which refreshes me and makes me glad. How can I then enter this rest and surrender? Among other things, by crying before God, and by meditating on God's Word."

Matthew 11:28-29 from the Amplified Bible reads like this: "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy-laden and over burdened, and I will cause you to rest – I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest – relief, ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet – for your souls."

The Sabbath

I have mentioned that the order of creation was laid down in the Ten Commandments as a protection for us. One of the commandments that claims the most attention is the Sabbath, in Exodus 20: 7-11, which reads, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy".

If you are too pressured and stressed to use one day a week for the Lord and rest, then you are just as irrational as Erik Ewalds described: "I am so dead tired that I cannot lie down and rest". Many jobs demand that we work on Sundays, but the foundational attitude of taking time

with the Lord, with His church body and to rest, must still be there. This is a protection against being burnt out.

Spiritual service and burn-out

At this point I want to give the Lord's servants some good advice. A well-known teacher shared some of his experiences with the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the body's adrenaline response. When he ministers under the anointing of the Spirit of God, there is a certain elated feeling which quickens the body because of the adrenaline released. Later, the ministry can continue on the adrenaline alone, long after the anointing has lifted. One of the possible reasons why pastors are suffering from burn-out is that they have not learned to differentiate between the anointing and the enthusiasm resulting from the presence of adrenaline. We need to pray for discernment so that we can be in service for a long time. Of course, the same applies to all believers.

Martin Luther said that some days he had so much to do that he needed to pray for three hours so that he would be able to get everything done. What an example! Prayer helps us to prioritise the day's activities correctly and to be led by God. This can save much time and strength.

Burn-out is related to the spirit of this age in the Western world. It is almost fashionable! I am completely convinced that the forces of darkness use this to their advantage. Because it is so common, we accept it readily and succumb to the symptoms. Besides that, I also believe that satanic curses are directed towards leadership in this area. It was not coincidence that three pastors from the same place all had to take sick leave for burn-out at the same time. I am not saying by this that burn-out is a spiritual or demonic phenomenon, but that there *can be* elements of it in the situation which triggered the symptoms.

Weaknesses which lead to collapse and burn-out

1. Guilt and compensation

In chapter seven we read about the doctor who tried to compensate for the guilt she had taken on after the death of her missionary friend. It

brought about an inability to set boundaries in her life and a tendency to allow people to take advantage of her, which led to extreme fatigue. This is a common phenomenon. It is evident in parents who, because of guilt related to their children, subconsciously try to compensate without holding to any boundaries. This must be exposed and action taken, to prevent being worn out and financially ruined as well.

2. Wrong sense of responsibility

In chapter 12 is the story of the six-year-old who saved her grandmother from being drowned. As a result, the girl had taken on a wrong sense of responsibility for protecting those around her from accidents. This demanded all her energy. Another example of a root leading to a wrong sense of responsibility is found in chapter 16, referring to paralysis of the soul. One of many symptoms is that you take responsibility for someone who is in a worse condition than you, so that you will feel better about yourself.

3. Shock experiences which leave their mark

At the beginning of the chapter I described the consequences following my own experience of getting lost. "Now I'm all alone, with nobody to help me. I have to manage on my own and I have no strength." It was illogical and out of line with reality, but the thoughts themselves actually robbed me of my energy. After a traumatic experience like this, similar situations later in life can release the same symptoms of weakness, as in my story of collapsing after moving house.

4. Co-dependent with a substance abuser

Relatives of a substance abuser are in the risk zone for collapse or burn-out. This can refer to various forms of abuse, not only alcohol and drugs. The pressure of a wrong sense of responsibility, manipulation from the abuser, the social need to keep up appearances and protect oneself from exposure, etc., drain one's energy. A co-dependent person needs support and help in such a relationship not to give in to the other person's substance abuse and behaviour, to stop trying to control the abuser, and to allow him- or herself to feel better.

5. Difficulty in setting boundaries

People who have been exposed to abuse of some sort often lack the ability to set boundaries or to say no, because their wills have been violated. It is easy to be taken advantage of in various situations and to feel very pressured by others' wishes. More about this in the next chapter.

6. Demands to succeed

The sense of pressure always to succeed and preferably to be the best causes a person to feel pushed to the extreme to perform well. It can be very difficult for such a person to handle failures and adversity, and could lead eventually to the "bottom falling out of the barrel". This is also described in chapter 15 concerning paralysis of the soul.

7. Legalism

Legalism is building our spiritual life on being achievers instead of building on God's grace. A person who falls into this trap will sooner or later "hit the wall" spiritually, as we cannot reach God's standards without resting in what Jesus has done for us.

Back to health

- Look after yourself! Because we consist of spirit, soul and body we need to pay attention to all areas. A change of environment, good nutrition, plenty of fresh air and exercise are important to get back into shape. You also rest better with the tiredness that comes from physical exertion than that which comes from tormenting thoughts.
- Pray for God's help and light in the situation. Take responsibility and ask for forgiveness where you have been wrong, where you have pushed yourself too far, or been careless. Forgive yourself!
- Forgive others for anything wrong in what they have said, or how they have judged you and acted towards you.
- Pray for the shock of the experience that triggered the reaction. Cut off all wrong soul ties to various details, words and even persons involved.
- Pray for healing for the body and soul.
- Take plenty of time to build yourself up in God's Word, praise and

worship, prayer and good Christian literature. Psalm 102, from its title to verse 7, can be used to describe burn-out. "A prayer of an afflicted man. When he is faint and pours out his lament before the LORD. Hear my prayer, O LORD; let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers. My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. Because of my loud groaning I am reduced to skin and bones. I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins. I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof." Verse four is the key: "...I forget to eat my food" (living by God's Word).

- Psalm 103 is a wonderful continuation from Psalm 102, and has many answers. Meditate on this Psalm daily. Psalm 104 takes us to an even higher level of praise and thanksgiving for God's greatness.

A little girl complained to her mother that her stomach was sore. Her mother said that it was sore because it was empty, and if she just filled it with something it would immediately feel better. That afternoon a man came to visit and after some time he mentioned that he had a headache. Immediately the little girl knew exactly how to help him. "That's because your head is empty, she explained. "If you just fill it with something it will feel better immediately!"

Healthcare for the spirit, soul and body

- Cast your burdens on the Lord and receive your strength from the Bible and prayer.
- Live according to creation's commandments as laid down in the body's nervous system and keeping the Sabbath.
- Relax, play and have fun.
- Deal with any weaknesses which place you at risk.
- Pray through situations, and believe that everything that happens can be used to the good. Provided you decide not to become bitter, everything will work out for the good. This attitude gives power to live in hard times.

I want to give a personal testimony of how something difficult was turned to good. I would never have come to the decision myself to take the time to write a whole book, even though I had already produced and distributed a few books. But God exhorted me to write a book about freedom. I had some material on cassettes and suggested to a friend that she write the book for me. She has also worked with counselling for many years and is a member of our church. Then something drastic happened. I started to experience flashes like lightning in front of one eye and soon I noticed stripes and dots in my vision. The ophthalmic clinic agreed to see me immediately and I was diagnosed with a detached retina. For one month I needed to keep absolutely still so that the retina would not come loose, because then my whole vision would be completely black. This meant no picking up, no hasty head movements, no jumping or running. I am a lively person and move a lot, so I became very tired trying to remember to take it slowly every minute of the day!

After a week I sensed the Lord telling me to sit in front of the TV screen — my ophthalmic device to magnify text powerfully — and to start writing the manuscript by hand. That way I would be forced to keep still. Someone else took care of the typing. Six weeks after the first eye developed these symptoms, the second eye started to have the same symptoms. There was no time to get depressed over what was happening in my "good" eye. With a clear conscience I could now decline all invitations and in peace and quiet continue working on the book, without any time pressures. God does not send physical weakness, but He turned this situation to something very good. My attitude to life is to ask God to turn things to good which were meant for evil. With this philosophy, it is easier to get through the difficult times.

Seven reasons not to worry

The first and most important step to stop worrying is always to cast our burdens on the Lord. Read Matthew 6:25-34 in your Bible and be encouraged by the comments below, letting your faith be strengthened by God's care.

- 6:25 God, who has given you life, can also take care of the smallest details.
6:26 Concerns for tomorrow hamper your way for today.
6:27 Worry is seldom constructive, but nearly always destructive.
6:28-30 God does not forget those who depend on Him.
6:32 Worry is a sign of a lack of faith in God and an understanding of who He is.
6:33 Life is full of challenges which God wants us to take up. He who worries uses up energy on the wrong things.
6:34 He who takes a day at a time keeps worry at a distance.

Under Our Skin!

*There once was an oyster, whose story I tell,
Who found that some sand had got into his shell.
It was only a grain, but it gave him great pain;
For oysters have feelings, although they are plain.
Now, did he berate the harsh workings of fate,
That had brought him to such a deplorable state?
"No," he said to himself, "Since I cannot remove it,
I'll lie in my shell, and think how to improve it."
The years rolled around, as the years always do,
And he came to his ultimate destiny: stew.
Now the small grain of sand that had bothered him so,
Was a beautiful pearl all richly aglow.
This tale has a moral, for isn't it grand,
What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand?
Think... What could WE do, If we'd only begin,
With some of the things that get under OUR skin.
— Author Unknown*

 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*
Matthew 11:28-29

Chapter 15

Abuse

In this chapter I want to give some examples of physical, psychological, spiritual and sexual abuse, their consequences, and the healing that was received. Common consequences of these abuses are a kind of paralysis of the soul and an inability to set boundaries in day-to-day life; these are the results of the will having been violated. Many times there is a fear of ending up in another similar situation, or a fixation can develop that is connected to a certain detail of the abuse.

In order to be set free or delivered from such consequences, it is very important for the victim of the abuse to choose to forgive the person or people who violated him or her and to lay down the right to be bitter. This is often a process that takes a little time, as it works on different levels in the person.

Physical abuse

Knife trauma

A well-known pastor tells of how he, as a young man of 20, happened to get involved in a domestic quarrel. A drugged man was attacking a woman with a knife. The 20-year-old was called in by the woman's friend in the hope that he could intervene. He did, and was locked into the room with the man wielding the knife, but managed to get away with only a cut in his leather jacket.

After this event he was tormented throughout his pastoral training by a fear of death, anxiety related to death and fear of deadly illnesses. During a time of counselling he was given the advice to become friends with his fear – "but fear is my worst enemy", he reasoned, and did not accept further counsel. At the end of his training he thought, "How can I go out and minister to others, when I myself have such fear?"

One night his wife prayed for him and the acute fear left him for a time. However, it returned with a vengeance, and he could not even handle seeing blood, as there had been a lot of blood during the knife incident.

He felt faint even at the sight of a blood sample, and the thought of going to hospital was overwhelming. If he came across the scene of an accident while driving, he dared not stop.

Then a few years ago he heard the teaching on shock experiences. He told of the incident 20 years previously and was ministered to through prayer. During the time of ministry he did not feel anything at all, but on the way home a car in front of him drove off the road. Immediately he stopped, and as the first on the scene, amidst shaken people and blood, he called the police and ambulance. Later he exclaimed, "I would never have dared do that before!", but this time he went and helped without a thought of fear. Furthermore, he has experienced a new peacefulness in his personal life and is not as easily stressed or restless. He has also come into a new dimension in his ministry.

Teenager who shut out the world

On an application form to the church youth camp, a mother from another town requested counselling for her 13-year-old son. He had long before closed himself off and would hardly ever speak, either to a peer or to an adult.

During the camp, which was attended by 400 young people, I had difficulty finding out who or where he was, but God had other plans than for me to talk to someone who did not want to communicate. During a meeting at the camp I spoke about the importance of forgiving people who have wronged us. One of the words of knowledge I had was that there was a person who needed to forgive someone for an abusive blow to the head. A teenager identified himself as the person. After he had forgiven and we had prayed for the shock he had experienced at the time of the incident, he started to cry. A male leader hugged him until he stopped crying. It was only then that we found out he was the son of the mother who had requested the counsel. Right there, he was set free from his bondage.

Later, the social worker assigned to the boy's case, an atheist, asked what had happened to the boy, as he had changed so much. On telling the social worker about the camp, the parents were informed that they should let their son go to the church in Uddevalla as often as he wished, as it was good for him!

Assault

A woman shared her experience of a physical assault she suffered from her fiancé. When she refused certain things he had planned he became desperate, attacked her violently in public and did not stop until he was overpowered by a number of people.

The shock to the woman was very deep. Over the next few weeks she lived under great fear. "Was it his car I saw in the rear view mirror?" or, "What if he knows where I am now?"

This experience resulted in her becoming very sensitive to light, developing heart palpitations and a very low stress tolerance. She was given sick leave from work for two months due to a "crisis reaction" and received treatment for a whiplash injury from the abuse. Later in her home church she received ministry for the shock experience and was healed immediately of her whiplash during the service!

Most of the testimonies in this book tell of ministry many years after the traumatic experience occurred. However, God wants to equip us and give us knowledge to minister to each other immediately after something has happened. By doing that, people can be saved many years of suffering. We will now look at psychological and spiritual abuse.

Psychological abuse

Bullied at school

In one of the lower grades a young boy was teased badly. He had almost always been bullied, but now it reached its peak. Numerous times his classmates took his books, tore them and threw them on the floor. Then they told the teacher that he had become angry and tore the books himself. The result was that the boy was sent home from school. Something in his soul closed down when he had to read and write, and he was diagnosed as being severely dyslexic. Later in life he managed to hide his problem by using technology, like tape recorders and so forth.

He was more than 30 years old when he received ministry and forgave the bullies. The next morning he discovered that he had been sitting reading an English magazine for two hours! He had subscribed to the magazine because of the nice pictures but had never been able to

read anything. He spoke English well, but now he could suddenly read it well too, not to mention his mother tongue, Swedish, of course. He can now write normally, and is reading his Bible himself, no longer having to depend on cassettes.

Spiritual Abuse

Without going too deeply into this area, we can summarise that sometimes in situations of prayer, expressions like, "Thus saith the Lord", are used to threaten, create fear, or to manipulate people into obedience or submission.

A person who is insecure, somewhat confused or spiritually weak can be at peril in such situations. The intention might not be to harm, but the consequences can be very harmful, if the spirit behind what is said is manipulative. It is also important to mention that a person suffering from rejection can easily misinterpret words spoken. Sometimes something is understood to be the very opposite of what was said! My pastor often says that rejection twists understanding of the teaching. It is important in some cases, therefore, to take time to discuss what was said, what was meant and what was understood.

This area covers a great deal, from very obvious delusions to everyday interactions with other people. A person that spreads discontent and bitterness around him can cause a lot of damage. In Hebrews 12:15 it says, "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many". This kind of person poisons others and infects their spiritual lives. Often these people are pushy and dominating in their opinions, and others can find it difficult to disagree. I would like to suggest that this is a form of abuse, which can have disastrous effects. Persons behaving this way should perhaps ask their victims, "Do you have anything against me poisoning or contaminating you?" Let this be a warning to those who delight in speaking about their discontent.

In the same way as with other abuses, the road to freedom and healing is through forgiving the abusers. Many times the shock associated with the abuse, and the incorrect soul ties with the person from whom it came, also need to be broken. The bondages of fear, control and manipulation should also be broken in prayer.

Spiritual bullying

A person can also be subjected to spiritual bullying because of boldly living by the truths of the Word. This can cause stress in various situations. At school, at work or even in some churches, one can be spiritually "frozen out" because one decides not to compromise God's will. We shall have a look at some examples. Following is an extract from a letter from a woman for whom I had prayed.

"During the past autumn we had a visit from Anita Barker for a few days. Through a word of knowledge, I received prayer for the after-effects of spiritual bullying at my work place, and I was completely healed. The first thing I realised that had been restored was my speech. I hadn't been able to speak fluently for a number of years because of a stutter. Since that evening after the prayer I have not stuttered once.

"That weekend I also responded for prayer about something that happened during my childhood. Also for that I received complete healing, although it was about a month before I discovered exactly what God had done in my life. The most fantastic thing is that I have experienced freedom again! My speech is normal and I am free from rejection. We have a mighty God!

"About a year ago I saw a Scripture verse which spoke right into my situation, and I have proclaimed it out loud every day. In Jeremiah 30:17 it says, "'But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,' declares the LORD, 'because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares'". I think it was this verse which paved the way for my healing."

Attempted spiritual control

During a longer teaching period, a woman received a very specific word of knowledge from the Lord during the morning session. She sensed that a female acquaintance would be asking her a specific question, and although in itself it was not an unusual thing, the Lord encouraged her to question the motives behind it.

The woman kept this in her heart, and soon the acquaintance whom the Lord had pointed out posed her question. In response she asked simply, "What is your motive for this?". The reaction she met was shockingly violent. It was like lighting a powder keg and out came all sorts of accusations. It seemed that to question her acquaintance's motive was

the worst thing anyone could ever have done, as she considered herself a very loving person.

The two women agreed to discuss the situation with the one responsible for organising the meetings. Before the get-together, however, the woman who had been warned by God felt so uncomfortable that she decided she would deal with the situation by asking for forgiveness. The other woman accepted her apology but, with her chin held high, offered no excuse nor asked forgiveness for her own behaviour and accusations. Then the darkness descended on the one who had asked the motive in obedience to God. The tears would not stop coming, suicidal thoughts plagued her, and chaos reigned within. For two days she cried, but eventually talked with a friend who had given her counsel for many years. "Break the spirit of control immediately that has been placed upon you by this person! She demands only submission and you should never have bowed down under that", she said. After prayer and breaking the bondage of control which had brought about the terrible thoughts, everything returned to normal.

This turned out to be a very interesting lesson in holding on to what God has said, walking in spiritual discernment and daring to stand firm in a conflict. Also through this event, a spirit of control operating through one person had manifested itself, and that person had the choice of dealing with it in her life or not.

Sexual abuse

This is a very big area, covering many issues. It encompasses anything from older children's games which go too far, to incest, hetero- or homosexual rapes, group rapes, etc.. A person's own integrity is violated when boundaries are overridden through sexual abuse. The following testimony shows what damage can take place, but more than that, it shows what help is available in the Lord!

Woman stops speaking

A woman who had been in psychiatric care for many years came to us from another part of the country for help. Among other symptoms, she had stopped speaking, so a Christian relative came with her as support.

Before we met, I received a word of knowledge from the Lord about

rape during teenage years. After an opening prayer, I asked her to share about this rape. Immediately she started speaking! That was a miracle in itself. She said, "I have never told anyone about this before. One month after the rape I ended up in a psychiatric ward, but nobody found out about it there."

Following our talk and prayer some changes took place, and soon after that she was able to move into a home of her own. What no therapist or psychiatrist could get out of her in over 20 years the Holy Spirit dealt with in just a few minutes! He is sovereign!

Attempted rape

After a dramatic and horrible rape attempt by an older man, a teenage girl developed various problems. It was not her first sexual contact and not her last either. Drugs and alcohol came into the picture and she ended up having a child.

Some time after this she was saved and met a wonderful Christian man. Before they got married, she coerced him into signing a contract never to press her into having sex. It would only happen on her initiative, even if it meant years between each act. He was very understanding, and said that he would wait for her. He signed the contract!

During the first year of their marriage, the woman received ministry for the consequences of the attempted rape ten years previously and her fear left her. Today the couple has a wonderful relationship!

Prostitution

I remember two prostitutes who had had the same experience in their first sexual contact, both at the age of twelve years. They were raped in a situation where many people were watching.

They despised their own bodies because of the total degradation which they had suffered, and after that it seemed as if nothing mattered. Today both of them are completely changed, thanks to the Lord, who has totally restored their lives.

When we minister to someone who has had many wrong sexual experiences, it is important to start with praying through the earliest encounters, even if worse things happened later. Necessary steps to restoration are to confess sin, forgive oneself, and forgive the others who

have been involved.

A very common consequence of various abuses is, as mentioned earlier, that the will becomes paralysed and people have difficulty in setting boundaries or saying no. This makes it easy to become a victim again. The Lord can break the paralysis in a very real way.

A woman who could not say no

A woman who, as a pre-schooler, had been exposed to continued abuse, responded during her teenage years with an inability to say no. If someone made a sexual advance, she would become almost physically paralysed and allow anything to take place, just waiting for it to be over. She felt there was no way for her to get out of it.

If you sometimes wonder why some people seem to find themselves in abusive situations so much more than others do, it has nothing to do with "bad luck". At times it seems as if it is written on the person's forehead, "I'm available, I can't say no!" The woman mentioned here became an abuse victim of both women and men. This of course led to an incredible self-hatred. She was full of shame, guilt and condemnation, and her whole life's attitude was that she did not deserve anything good. In almost all areas of her life it was difficult or impossible for her to set boundaries.

Today she is set free from her past. She is able to allow herself the things that are good, fun and lovely. Even expensive things!

I too suffered sexual abuse by a teenage boy when I was five years old. It left its mark on my life and resulted in that same inability to set boundaries. I can therefore vouch for the fact that after an experience like that, the belief that "good things can be for me, too", seems very unreal and hard to accept. But there is freedom and restoration in all these areas, for everyone!

The power of seduction

A middle-aged woman said that as a non-Christian she had had a sexual relationship with a man for many years. It was not a steady relationship, but it started the year before they had both married other partners. Only when she became a Christian eleven years later did she break the relationship. There was a strong bond between them which was so powerful that she sometimes thought she was possessed. She was in-

credibly attracted to the man and at the same time despised both him and herself.

After she was saved she experienced the best years in her marriage. However, her husband eventually met another woman, they divorced and in the following years she lived only for the Lord and her children. There was no man in her life and the idea of having an adulterous, extramarital relationship was unthinkable. Something that disturbed her, however, was that she would occasionally fall madly in love with a flirtatious, often younger, man. These were Christian men, and it was never spoken about nor did it ever lead to anything, except for one time when everything went wrong. It was then that she asked the Lord why it had gone wrong, and He answered, "Seduction."

For many years the spirit of seduction had held her in bondage. Even though she had sincerely prayed the sinner's prayer when she had become a Christian, the root to the problem had never been brought into the light. Now the Lord showed her how this spirit had affected her from when she was four years old. A friend of the family, a mentally handicapped man in his twenties, had sexually abused her at that time. As an unbeliever she was always in the grip of the spirit, but as a Christian it could not control her if she lived close to the Lord. However, now and again it could still affect her, when a man picked up on it and responded.

Now after nearly 50 years, the Lord set her free from the experience and the bondage that had made it so difficult for her to set boundaries. She was released from condemnation, from a death wish and a general desire not to live, which had sometimes emotionally overwhelmed her.

Consequences of sexual abuse

The shock of sexual abuse, especially if it is the first sexual encounter someone experiences, often leads to paralysis of the natural sexual feelings and robs the person of the natural desire for a mate. A woman who, as a teenager, saw a man indecently exposing himself in a sexually aroused state, had since then only dared to be friends with those of the opposite sex. A number of young gentlemen had asked her out, but she had never dared to accept, as she was still too frightened by what she had seen as a young girl. After receiving prayer for that experience she was set free

and married within a couple of years.

Sex outside marriage opens you to a spirit of lust, whether you agreed to the act or it was forced on you. When it has not been the person's choice the damage is not always recognised in the emotions until they enter a Christian marriage. Then the spirit of lust (not to be confused with a healthy, sound sexual attraction) does not want to be part of it, because it does not want to be faithful. If lust is present it often manifests as attraction to pornography or other perversions. There is no place for lust in a faithful relationship, so it is easy for the person to end up being unfaithful. Sexual experiences outside marriage become treacherously attractive. It seems that with a new partner the whole of life will be happier. But if you put that thought into action, you will soon find yourself stuck on an ever-turning treadmill. It will not be long before it is all repeated in the next marriage, and the next, and the next

It is not unusual for a woman who has been abused sexually to become dysfunctional sexually, viewing sex as a necessary evil in order to have children. Thank God, He can heal and restore.

The shock after abuse can also lead to perverted sexuality. Over the years we have ministered to people with all sorts of backgrounds in the sexual arena: prostitutes, homosexuals, lesbians, transvestites, those who indecently expose themselves or are peeping toms, rapists, paedophiles, those who have been involved with incest and bestiality (sex with animals), and so on. All of these have been able to experience God's great power, love and grace and have received power to forgive and to be restored.

We have seen many marriages restored and heard many testimonies of how a couple's marriage life has improved, since the past was dealt with through prayer. We will continue with this topic in chapter 17.

Jesus was abused and killed

All forms of abuse leave wounds and damage in varying degrees. I want to close this chapter by focusing again on the soul's Shepherd and Counsellor, Jesus. He was beaten, abused and killed, and because of His death on the cross, you and I can be healed. Isaiah 53:7-8 says, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he

was taken away". Verses 3-5: "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

🔑 *"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:4-5*

Chapter 16

Paralysis of the soul

Children in Crisis

Children come into crisis when they lose one of their parents, whether by death or divorce. Children can also be victims of bullying as mentioned earlier, which can cause serious wounding. The shock from such experiences can cause the soul to become paralysed, and certain soul functions can stop developing. These functions are such things as the abilities to take responsibility, relate to others, or to experience emotions such as joy and sorrow. A lack of reaction in adversity can also be a symptom. The functions of the soul have either been shut off or not been able to develop normally.

Problems like these can also develop in children who, for some reason, believe that they are going to lose someone close. Other situations such as accidents, threatening words, a parent's anger, lengthy periods of absence from parents, wrong messages from the parents, or abuse, can severely damage a child's soul. Where substance abuse or psychological illness is present in the family, the children often live under the pressure of a parent's mood swings, outbursts of anger and harsh words. As the sensitivity of children varies with the individual, it cannot be determined how each child will be affected, but it is important that the child is prayed for as soon as possible after an upheaval.

Before I describe how the results of such circumstances reveal themselves in adult life and how a person can be helped, I would like to share some testimonies.

Fight for your life

I once met a woman in her 30's who was very violent and had served time in prison for violence. During a time of counselling she was living in a physician's home, and he said that she had the emotional development of a five-year-old and needed to be accepted as such.

I asked her what had happened when she was five years old and she

replied, "My Dad died, and since then I have had to fight for my life."

I have no report from her about any change following our prayer, as I have not met her again. But we can learn from her situation how damaged we can be as humans, after a traumatic experience during childhood.

Abandoned as a child

The following testimony has all the ingredients of distress and restoration. This woman is a miracle in numerous areas! The first time our church had any contact with her was when she was in a psychiatric hospital. She had then been hospitalised for just on two years, and our pastor's wife and a youth visited her regularly. After some time she was released and moved with her husband to our town. They had married a year earlier after her husband became a Christian, having met at the hospital when he had been under treatment on the same psychiatric ward.

When this woman was eight months old, her mother had disappeared from home and her 11-year-old sister became her mother. She also had older brothers. Her father was present but he was an alcoholic, and during periods of drinking bouts he was very violent.

When the girl was four or five years old, her mother returned and the parents remarried. Soon, however, they discovered that the mother was already pregnant with another man's child, and so they divorced again. At the same time the older sister left home.

Now the girl was alone with her father, who hated her, as she reminded him of her mother. Sometimes he would chase her around the house with an axe in a drunken rage. Her older brothers abused her sexually as well. When she was eleven years old her father did not want to live with her in town anymore. She was given food and money so she could live on her own in the apartment, and he moved out to a farm and carried on drinking. The apartment soon became a hangout for young men, the abuse of alcohol and later drugs. In her teenage years she became involved in the occult and Satanism.

At the age of 19 she had a little daughter, but when the baby was six months old, this young mother felt she could no longer handle the situation. She abandoned the baby and escaped to Copenhagen, ending up in Christiania (a specific area of the city where drugs are legal and there

are virtually no laws). Here she lived a life of total degradation of body and soul.

Then at the age of 21 something fantastic happened that changed the course of her life. She was saved in a miraculous way, her life was transformed, she entered Bible school and got involved in missions. However, there were still dark clouds in the sky — clouds of rejection, condemnation, shame, fear and many other ugly things from her past, which did not want to let her go. She eventually went to a treatment home with psychiatric care, and there she learned for the first time to talk about her problems. The terrible things that she had been through she had tried to lock away and forget. Her emotions were so completely cut off that when someone tried to talk to her about the past it was like talking to a wall. Of course, the medication she was on also contributed to this lack of response.

Eventually she came to our church and a healing and deliverance process began. At that time she was overweight, it was difficult for her to stay away from occult movies, and she only managed to work in short spurts. Step by step, she came into a measure of freedom, but the biggest change came when we prayed for her soul, which long ago had stopped developing. Inside, she was like a little baby who just wanted to lie in her mother's arms. In some areas she was more like a five-year-old, and in others an insecure, rebellious teenager. The time we spent in prayer was only a few minutes. We prayed that the paralysis would leave her soul, the shock of losing her parents would disappear, her soul would develop and grow so that she could be a mature woman, and that her emotions would be able to blossom.

Before long we could all see the change. At the time, she weighed 120 kilos, but started to eat healthy food and to exercise. Five days a week she swam 1500 metres a day. In one year she lost 44 kilos. The year she swam was also the year that her emotions were restored bit by bit. A lot of the pent-up anger over all she had been part of and exposed to came to the fore. Anger has a lot of energy which needs to be channelled in a right way, so that it is not released on people or possessions. She released her energy in the pool.

One of the turning points came when she stopped smoking. She had started smoking as a nine-year-old and smoked for 27 years. People caught in substance abuse do not get completely free until they stop

smoking, as this is connected to a lifestyle and a way of thinking that is escapist.

Now the woman's spiritual life really accelerated. A few years ago, she started having regular contact with her daughter, who grew up in a foster home, her mother having given birth to her when little more than a child herself. It is now more than seven years since we prayed for her. She has taken up studies and during the whole process of healing her husband has been a tremendous support to her.

How to handle anger

Ephesians 4:26-27 says, "In your anger do not sin". If your anger goes into sin, you need to ask for forgiveness, because we should not let the sun go down on our anger.

Some good ways of channelling our anger, apart from various forms of sport or exercise, are to dust rugs, polish floors, chop wood, clean storage space, tear cardboard boxes, etc.. Take advantage of the energy. You can get a lot done in a short time! If you bottle up your anger, make sure you let it out in a constructive way. That is healthy living!

Paralysis of the soul

The phenomenon of a soul being stunted in its development in some area is not unusual. The two examples I have given might seem extreme, but among addicts, these are the normal ingredients forming the foundation to the problem. They cannot cope with the demands and responsibilities of adult life but flee from reality through drugs. This will be dealt with further in chapter 19, under "Shame, guilt and condemnation".

Not all wounded people become substance abusers, and emotional wounds with their symptoms obviously vary in degree. However, you will find such wounded people in all professions, towns and cities. Some manage to cover their problem so well that others are not aware of it, and without teaching, it can be difficult to identify the foundational cause.

In this chapter I would like to summarise from my own and others' experiences how a person with paralysis of the soul functions. It is my understanding and experience that the symptoms develop in one of two directions. The expressed symptom is that of either wanting to be in the limelight at all times and show how good the person is, or fleeing from

responsibility and demands, thus becoming lazy and self-centred. I have seen both symptoms at close range. It can also be that the same person manifests both symptoms, demonstrating good behaviour in certain areas and totally irresponsible behaviour in others. This should not be confused with being childlike, which is positive and glorious, making life more fun, both for the person as well as for those around him or her. Games, jokes and pranks can liven up any environment. Everyone benefits from this as a counterweight to the stress, pressure and seriousness of life.

When you read the common symptoms of soul paralysis listed below, you may recognise yourself in one or two areas, but that does not mean that you have the whole foundational problem. If you suffer from paralysis of the soul, you normally have the majority of symptoms. If you see that this is you, then you need God's intervention to disperse the effects of shocks and to release the paralysis. Dealing with isolated symptoms only can be experienced as a hopeless exercise, and change is seldom complete or lasting. Instead, you need to deal with the foundational cause, the reason for the paralysis. God bless you – there is much hope, but only in Jesus!

Common symptoms:

- Low stress tolerance. The person cannot handle much pressure before stress symptoms appear in the temperament or the body, for example, stomach-ache, headaches, heart palpitations, dizziness or abnormal tiredness.
- Difficulty in handling the slightest symptoms of illness. These are often used as an excuse for not doing things considered unpleasant, uncomfortable or too demanding, and such behaviour often becomes a vicious circle.
- Self-centredness. The present revolves around the self, the person's situation, needs and wishes to be satisfied. Manipulation is not uncommon.
- If successful in one area of life, the person tends to want that area to be continually emphasised.
- Because of insecurity and sensitivity it is easy to be hurt and shocked by events and words. Trivialities become big issues.
- An insatiable need for attention, seeking to get it by one way or an-

other. Feeling good only when attention is given.

- Absence of a healthy self-confidence. Often, the person has a very low self-image, or it can go the other way and the person thinks too much of him- or herself.
- Often caught up in the teenage mentality of knowing everything, having answers to everything and seeing everything as either black or white. Having a "know-it-all" attitude. There is an absence of the normal maturity process which makes one more humble.
- Rebelliousness, which often goes hand-in-hand with rejection and insecurity. There is trouble with submitting to others and being corrected.
- Rejection, making it difficult to give and receive real love. Relationships often become controlling, manipulative and attempts at "owning" other people.
- Easily hurt and disappointed with others who will not pay enough attention or put up with bad behaviour.
- Difficulty in creating lasting, deep relationships.
- Fear, worry, anxiety and sometimes panic can distract and disturb. The fear is often fear of failure, which makes it difficult to dare to try new things.
- Difficulty in making decisions. There are either quick, impulsive decisions in the search for 'happiness', or difficulty in making a decision for fear of it turning out wrong.
- Either quiet and introverted because of insecurity, or loud and domineering, talking a lot and having difficulty in paying attention and listening to others.
- Cannot take responsibility for one's own limitations and mistakes, but tends to blame everything on everybody else. Always finding excuses, which often focus on others.
- A strong need to live constantly through someone else and to be affirmed.

"I must perform" symptoms:

- A need to perform not only well, but to be the best, in order to make a good impression and be affirmed. Being a perfectionist or pedantic is the norm. Others can feel that the demands are too high and that they do not meet the standard.

- Reputation and appearance are more important than what the person feels like on the inside.
- Identity is sought by putting one's value in being unselfish and concerned for others. The motive has more to do with self-promotion than real love. This is a difficult point for people to recognise in themselves.
- Workaholism, which is a form of abuse.

"I can't perform" symptoms:

- The law of least resistance rules and the preferred choice is the easiest way out, which is usually the "same old" pattern, which is known and therefore feels secure.
- A lack of empathy. It is often difficult to stretch oneself to become involved in others' needs if there is nothing to gain personally. This naturally affects relationships and family life. In a marriage it can cause many problems, where life should be a constant giving and taking.
- One allows all sorts of treats in order to feel good, making it difficult to keep within one's economic budget. The family's general needs are seen as not as important.
- Frustration which often explodes in outbursts of anger.
- Difficulty in accepting adult responsibility, but at times the person compensates by taking responsibility for someone who is weaker. Seldom, however, is there any good fruit from this kind of relationship.
- The expression "I don't have the energy" often has more to do with emotional strength than actual physical strength.
- Restlessness. The person has difficulty completing tasks, and lacks perseverance and concentration. Giving up studies, changing jobs regularly or moving house often, are symptoms, too.
- Exaggerated need for pastimes and entertainment.
- Readily changes night for day if possible. The day is demanding, while the night is quieter but more fun.
- Easily ends up in escapist behaviour and abuse in some form, for example, food, TV, gambling, sex, pills, alcohol and other drugs.

A person in spiritual leadership shared how at a church leadership meeting he had asked God to help them all lay down childishness in their lives, so that they could carry their full responsibility in the congre-

gation. In his prayer, he added that if there was any childishness in his life would God please remove it. A few days later he sensed God saying to him, "There is a small insecure child inside you". He was reminded of a very difficult experience in his childhood. It had caused paralysis of the soul, so that he often felt he had to perform and, preferably, be the best in his area of expertise. The Lord also showed him that he only felt good when he was the centre of attraction and had everybody's attention. Subsequently, he received prayer for the childhood shock and felt a deep sorrow lift off him. The sense of insecurity, which had always gnawed away on the inside, also left him. He felt like a new person and since then has experienced a completely new strength in being able to be involved in other people's lives instead of just his own. He also said that the desire to be in the centre and to emphasise his achievements had gone. He feels calm, secure and relaxed among other people and can really enjoy life. Many have commented on the noticeable change.

Steps to freedom and healing

- 1.Awareness of your own situation is necessary.*** It is not enough that others see what the foundational problem is, but you need to have the insight yourself and be prepared after prayer to take up a new identity, as well as new behaviour patterns and habits.
- 2.Shocks which have caused paralysis must be brought into the light.*** Talk about these and pray for revelation on what situations and occurrences could have caused the paralysis. Then pray over these experiences as you have learned in this book.
- 3.Lay a new foundation in life,*** build a new identity. It can take time, just as a little child needs to practise over a long period of time to be able to walk steadily. Important foundational stones are: A. Live in God's Word daily (chapter 23). B. Live in forgiveness and reconciliation (chapters 6-8). C. Develop a right image of God (chapter 10). D. Develop a right self-image (chapter 11). E. Say the same things that God does, that is, have a confession which is in line with God's Word (chapter 24). Follow the advice in chapter 23, "How to be free".
- 4.Extend your borders!*** Start doing things you have not done before. Your self-confidence will grow with that, too.

After prayer for shocks, a person's emotional development can often be seen in the specific area and, for a short period of time, the behaviour of a teenager can be recognised. A person does not mature to adulthood overnight, but in a comparatively short time will grow through the various stages that have been missed.

Some further advice

Below is a continuation of the previous testimony, "Abandoned as a child", about the woman who had been involved in the occult, drug problems and other things. She herself has summarised some important points she learned on the way to freedom and lasting deliverance, as she experienced it.

- ***The will is most important!*** Your will to change is like a rocket launcher. You get the rocket into orbit, but remember, without fuel it cannot happen. God's Word is the fuel that can change your life, and then you need to pursue the change. God does not, for example, stop smoking for you, but He helps you in your decision to stop smoking.
- ***Have a personal plan of action.*** Decide what you need to deal with first and foremost, and put together a practical plan of action to help you structure your day. Establish a time to get up in the morning and a time to go to bed at night. If you need to lose weight, make up a programme for that, maybe with the help of a weight loss programme or a dietician. Eat and exercise regularly – and above all, feed yourself on the strength building, healing Word of God!
- ***How are you thinking?*** Someone said that your future will never be greater than your present decision. To change your habits, you need to change your thinking pattern. Your thoughts produce a plan of action, which in turn establishes a habit, and the course for your life is set. If you want to change your future, you need to become aware of how you think, and take hold of your thoughts. God's Word gives you the right perspective of yourself, and gives you faith that you are His child and loved by Him. It gives you faith in what you can do in Him Who gives you strength. Bit by bit your thought life will be released from what holds you in bondage to your bad habits.
- ***Break old habits.*** Make up a daily schedule which meets your needs.

Some things have been mentioned already, like getting up in the morning, going to bed and eating properly (both in nutrition and time). You might also need to break loneliness and boredom. A hobby in which you are interested can give you new friends in a study group, etc.. You might also need to break with bad friendships which draw you back to your old way of life.

The woman in the testimony continues:

"When you live an unhealthy and undisciplined life as I did, the whole of daily life functions badly. The only thing you draw from it is condemnation, low self-worth and lack of courage. Everything is out of balance. To sleep all day, watch TV all night and eat junk food, etc., does not bring you freedom. Nothing good comes from that. When I started dealing with my thoughts and my bad habits, I noticed that my self-discipline became better and my character became stronger. What you do establishes a good or bad character. I gained stability, perseverance, strength, peace and joy, which caused my whole being to come into balance.

"During this time, the light of God's Word was renewing my mind, and I received a Scripture verse onto which I have held in all situations. Second Peter 1:3-8: "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"This is not only dealing with diet, exercise, healthy habits and so forth, but even more with building a strong, good character. When you live a balanced life in harmony with God and yourself, then you are whole in spirit, soul and body."

Loss of a bodily function

I received my life's biggest shock when I was 15 years old. Strangely, although it was a severe crisis in my life, I hardly remember anything about it! One day at a youth camp, amongst thousands of other teenagers, I discovered that I could no longer read the words in the songbook. Everything was blurry! I was admitted to the eye clinic where for three weeks the doctors tried to understand what had happened. My vision had now gone down to 15% and glasses did not help. I had to prepare myself for becoming completely blind.

As I said, there is not a lot that I remember from this time, only long lines of doctors and medical students who came to look at my eyes. No one knew what the cause was. The retina was perforated with many small holes over my line of vision amongst other places, which meant that I did not have any central vision, only peripheral. It is a type of macular degeneration, a breaking down of the retina cells, which causes the holes and thereby loss of sight. Many years later, I received a diagnosis in the States. Stargarts Disease is a very rare, genetic disease. This happened before optical aids were invented and they thought that every strain would deteriorate my vision, so I was ordered to leave school after the second year at secondary school. I was not to try reading, exert myself or even stand over hot pots in the kitchen!

After being off school for one term, following my Dad around from one building site where he worked to another, I asked if I could, at my own risk, complete my schooling. I was given permission to finish the lower levels, but senior high school was out of the question. So, as a sixteen-year-old, I went to a Bible school instead and continued after that as an evangelist within the Lutheran church.

About eight years ago, I understood for the first time that when I had been given the report that I was going blind, I had closed off my emotions. I did this to survive emotionally, and distanced myself from all that was said. Instead, I started to play act, so that nobody would notice anything. Sometimes I would sit and pretend that I was reading a book – but the book would be upside down! As a 15-year-old I was ashamed of my visual problem and wanted everyone to know that I could read. Soon the acting turned into a lifestyle of daring, where I tried all sorts of things. And I managed! God has built an incredible potential in the crea-

tion of man, although without Him it is limited because of sin. Out of my soulish ability, I dared many new things. Today, that daring coupled with a strong trust in God, means I get help for everything – even in the most impossible situations! Many people say that they cannot tell that I am visually impaired, which is a miracle. My body movement is like that of a sighted person, which is a completely supernatural phenomenon. I am told that I move about unhindered, without fumbling, and doing things which my lack of vision should actually make impossible.

Now I want to tell you about the cut-off emotions. Over all the years my feelings had functioned only while ministering under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This gave me immense joy and a sense of satisfaction, which led me to want to minister all the time. Because of that, I was restless and could not relax, which was not a lot of fun for my family, either.

After we came to Uddevalla 16 years ago, my pastor's wife asked the Lord why I was so hard in certain situations. Before the Lord answered her, He asked if she was willing to pray for a release in me, without my knowledge. Even if it took five years before the answer came, she said she would. The Lord then said, "Anita has cut off her emotions, but you are not to tell her, because she can't handle that now". So the pastor's wife prayed for a release for me for a number of years.

One day during a service, a prophetic word came to me that I would laugh and cry with people as a healing for them. It sounded rather funny, but soon it started to happen. Now the time was right and the paralysis in my emotions began to disappear. One after the other my emotions started returning.

Both mine and others' experience is that emotions come back one at a time. It can take a day or so to become used to an emotion and be able to handle it. Then it is quiet for a while. I remember the day that anger awoke in me. I took the hedge trimmer, went out in the garden and cut bushes for hours. Self-pity also came up. One day I was about to have lunch with a friend, when a light bulb went out right over the serving table, and I could not see what was in the various food containers on the table. I started crying! It was so embarrassing, but that emotion came into balance after some time. Now it was very clear to me that my emotions were coming back at the stage of development where

they were cut off, so long ago during my teens. I could therefore pray for a quick growth, so that I did not stay at the teenage stage too long.

Some remarkable months followed. Ephesians 5:18 says, "Do not get drunk on wine Instead, be filled with the Spirit". The Lord knew what I needed. In order to have the strength for other people's problems all the time, and simultaneously go through this process, I would daily experience the Lord's infilling of the Holy Spirit. In one short moment I would take a "sip" and feel almost drunk, and yet happy and quickened in my spirit. At times I giggle just at the thought of it. One minute bathed in the Holy Spirit takes away a whole day's tiredness. Stresses and frustrations disappear, without side effects.

In Acts 3:19 it says, "... that times of refreshing may come from the Lord". The Amplified Bible adds: "from the presence of the Lord". The truth is that the Lord sends refreshing so that we will be strengthened to carry on working in His kingdom, not just to sit in it and be selfish. On the day of Pentecost, Peter soon sobered up enough to preach and 3000 were saved.

This amazing restoration work in my emotional life has brought about a greater depth in my ministry.

Children need support and prayer

It is very important to pray together in your home with your children in a natural way. What security it creates when children can talk with their parents and with Jesus about the hardships of the day, and experience healing. A time for 'hygiene of the soul' like this should be just as important for the children as washing their faces and brushing their teeth before they go to bed.

In a church's children's ministry, teachers or leaders can also pray for difficult situations children have experienced during the week, things which have frightened or made them sad.

It is important that parents are aware of how children can be affected by insecurity in the home. It should cause the parents to be even more dependent on the Lord for help to hold the home together and to reach for God's solutions in relational problems. The quick divorce solution has a high price, especially for the younger children, who can be damaged for the rest of their lives. As the world is today, children need more

prayer and support than ever before. It is wonderful to be able to point to the Shepherd and Counsellor of our souls, Jesus. The upcoming generations will one day carry the responsibility and many need the miracle power of God for healing in order to become everything that God has intended them to be.

🗝️ *"They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble... ." Jeremiah 31:9*

Chapter 17

From where does our help come?

The answer to the question of where to get help is not Anita Barker, or the church in Uddevalla, Sweden. Neither is it another person or place that seems to know how to handle problems. The answer is JESUS! If you do not know Him, you need to get to know your personal Friend and Saviour. Read through chapter 3, "Transformation", again, and the beginning of chapter 6, "Forgiveness". You can also accept Jesus by praying this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need You!
I have gone my own way and sinned against You.
Thank You Jesus that You died and rose again for me.
Please forgive me my sins.
I open my heart and receive You as my Lord.
Please take control of my life and have Your way in me.
Amen."

First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness".

Romans 10:9-10 says that "if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved".

Thank God for your salvation, for what Jesus has done for you and for the new life He has given you. Thank Him for the good gifts that come from Him. Thank Him for all the good that He has for you to receive. Make contact with a Christian church or group in order to receive help and advice in how to grow in your faith, and to be part of the fellowship of Christians.

If you have a need

If you have areas in your life where you have needs, I want to advise you not to start chasing after people to help you! This will only lead to disappointment. Your friends may run away from you in frustration. God uses people as one of His channels to reach out to us, but all your trust needs to be placed in Him. No person can remove your anxiety, your phobias or your bitterness. If you cling to another person to carry you, it will not work for long. Again, you will only be disappointed. The Lord does not allow another person to take the place that is meant only for Him. God is our refuge, a help in trouble, faithful – no person can take that place!

In our fellowship we have had to face the fact that many find it easier to turn to people for help than to seek help from God themselves. If I was a psychologist I could probably give some good, wise advice for various situations. Or if I was a licensed doctor I could write out some prescriptions for medicines to calm nerves, suppress anxiety or to give pain relief to those seeking help. But we do not have this to offer, and ultimately it is the same story for all those who serve the Lord. We can only point to Jesus and the help He has to give.

We are simply facilitators who remove obstructions and help "paralysed" people to Jesus. Mark 2:3-12 tells how a paralysed man's friends helped him with what he could not do himself: to get to Jesus, the only One who could help him. They carried the lame man in his bed, broke open the roof in the building where Jesus was, and let him down through the hole so that Jesus could heal him. In this same way we can be of help to others. We can "carry the lame" to the place of hope, but the change takes place only when Jesus and the seeker meet. His miracle-working power must make the difference. Zechariah 4:6b says, ""Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit," says the LORD Almighty".

Places to meet with God

If we want to meet a certain person, we ask how and when we can meet. When we want to meet God, it is important that we follow His conditions for how it should happen. Without these conditions – rules of etiquette – we cannot boldly suppose that we will meet Him. Sometimes we can be pleasantly surprised by an unexpected visit from some-

one we have not met in a while. In the same way God can surprise us, but we cannot expect that it will be like that all the time. There is a way to conduct ourselves properly with the living and holy God we serve, just as there is a certain way we behave with someone with whom we have a close relationship. We do not just barge in, but approach with respect. Likewise, with God. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you". We will look at some of the main Biblical ways to meet with God.

Three preachers sat discussing the best positions for prayer while a telephone repairman worked nearby. "Kneeling is definitely best," claimed one. "No," another contended. "I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven." "You're both wrong," the third insisted. "The most effective prayer position is lying prostrate, face down on the floor." The repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, fellas," he interrupted, "the best prayin' I ever did was hangin' upside down from a telephone pole."

1. Healing grace and forgiveness

God's intervention recorded in all the different testimonies in this book is grounded in His endless grace. "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Eccl. 3:22-23)

You have read many testimonies of how numerous people's lives have been healed through forgiveness. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to walk in forgiveness and reconciliation. Our whole Christian life rests on this foundation, and this is your most important meeting place with God. Wherever and whenever, you can turn to God for forgiveness and reconciliation, and in that way release the power of the cross in your life!

I want to recommend that you kneel when you come before the living God in confession. "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin" (2 Chronicles 7:14)

2. Healing in the Word

The Word received in faith has power mightier than anything else in the world. When God's Word becomes a revelation to us, (a *rhema* in Greek), it has the same power as God's spoken creative words, "Let there be...!" It is then that everything can be made new, healed and restored.

During the years that I lived in the States, the children and I visited Sweden once over Christmas. My oldest son, Michael, was then four and a half years old. He knew no Swedish and my parents knew no English. One day Michael and my father were out for a walk on the quay. The boy was full of pranks and tried to jump onto a boat, which his grandfather tried to stop. It was not easy with the language difficulties to direct that little boy. It was chaos!

Michael cried a lot over the experience, even after we came back to the States. One Friday, I visited his pre-school and noticed that he was not participating in the games, but sat to one side in a world of his own. The staff wanted to know what had happened in Sweden, because he had not been himself since his return. When we came home from school that day, I started reading Isaiah 53:5 to Michael and continued to do so many times a day over the weekend: "... by his wounds we are healed". When we fetched our son after school on the following Monday, they said to us, "You must have worked a lot with him over the weekend, because now he's his lively self again." At that time we did not understand much about shocks, but Jesus did and He healed and restored just the same.

There is a healing power in God's Word. Proverbs 4:20-22 speaks of this power. Verse 22 says that His words "are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body". Psalm 107:20 says, "He sent forth his word and healed them".

In a Swedish devotional book, the editor wrote the following introduction.

"Fill your mind and your subconscious with Scriptures, deliberately and completely. Repeat them aloud and silently, over and over, day by day. At length you will have filled your subconscious, leaving no room for any more negative, destructive thoughts. The positive, life-giving, up-building thoughts that you have put into your mind are stronger than

the negative or destructive ones. In this way you will be able to guard your relationships and life with those around you. It will no longer be you who are affected or disrupted by what happens around you, but you will be able to go on your way calmly and securely. You will find you are living in a world with completely different dimensions from before."

3. Healing through praise and worship

The Lord always wants to touch us and meet us, but we are not always as receptive to His voice and love – for various reasons. There is a place of meeting where you can experience God's presence in a very intimate way, when you open yourself to Him through worship. Irrespective of where you are and how you are doing, in your heart, through your mouth, you can open yourself to God to intervene in your situation – or just enjoy His presence because of who He is. As we worship Him, He is enthroned, and wherever there is praise and worship to the Lord His presence is there, too. Psalm 22:3 says, "Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel".

True praise and worship creates an awe of God in our lives. King Jesus we do not approach just "any old how". The Bible tells us how we should conduct ourselves before Him who is the "head over all the people": "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" (Psalm 100:4). Being God-fearing puts us in the right position for the Holy Spirit to touch our lives.

"Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise," says James 5:13b. However, praise and worship are not just for those who are happy, but those who are laden with sorrow and problems can also sing from their heart to God, and "...give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess. 5:18). We are encouraged to do this because the Lord knows that He can meet us in a very special way when we open ourselves to Him in worship. There is a holy place in praise and worship where we are still before Him and where He speaks, telling us how much He loves us, correcting us and healing us. This stillness does not mean that we must sing slowly and quietly, but that we allow our own desires and agendas to give way to Him, and acknowledge Him. Here are some testimonies of how the Lord can touch, heal and deliver us while we worship Him.

A young woman had difficulty expressing her love for Jesus. There was something that resisted every time she wanted to say that she loved Him. She understood that it was something that had attached itself to her soul, something that had paralysed her, but she could not break through it.

One day she was attending a praise and worship conference where the participants were in the presence of God, and a word of knowledge came from one of the leaders. Someone was going to be healed in the soul, but would only realise it later. This woman felt the word was for her, but did not understand what was happening within her. When the conference was over, she went home and awoke the next morning with these words in her mouth: "Jesus, I love you!" The "resistance" was gone and all negative emotions related to this inability to tell Jesus about her love had disappeared. She said it felt as if her mouth was "watering" at the name of Jesus, as if the love she had for Him was dripping from her mouth!

Another woman from our church who owns a business testified of how the Lord had healed her during praise and worship on a Sunday morning. She had many financial problems due to a change in the national sales tax system. She needed to pay the tax in arrears and in advance at the same time, and the pressure she felt from all this caused severe pains in her shoulders and neck. When the Lord was lifted up during praise and worship, she sensed how great and mighty God is, and an awareness of God being powerful enough to take control of her situation came over her. Suddenly she discovered that the pain was gone! Miraculously, the tax money was supplied too!

Another woman had had severe pain for over a year, especially in the one thumb grip because of overwork, and the other hand was well on the way to the same condition. This woman was asked to lead the praise and worship at her home church, which she agreed to do, but she was concerned. How would she manage to hold the microphone? During the worship she moved the microphone from one hand to the other a number of times, and when both hands had become tired she considered stopping, but decided, "I will continue to praise the Lord!" When she later took her seat, she realised that all pain was gone. Now, ten years later, it has still not returned.

Remember also the testimony in chapter 12 ("Alone at the children's

hospital"), where a woman was healed during the worship at church.

4. Healing in Holy Communion

Communion is a meeting place for you and Jesus, independent of other people. The wine symbolises the blood of Jesus, which has atoned for our sin. It is to remind us of what we have in Jesus and the New Covenant. The bread symbolises the body of Christ, who is humanity's Passover Lamb. When the children of Israel ate the Passover lamb on the last night they spent in Egypt, it was a shadow of Jesus and Holy Communion. Right there, everyone was healed. Psalm 105:37 says, "He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no-one faltered." The Amplified Bible says that, "there was not one feeble person among them". After that long period of hard slave labour in Egypt, there must have been many weak, pain-racked bodies and bad backs among the people. Many were old, but no one faltered. The Communion bread gives healing to the body and soul. Salvation, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing take place when we accept it by faith and receive with expectation from God.

For many years I understood only the importance of dealing with sin before receiving Communion. It was a time of affirmation, thanksgiving, cleansing and forgiveness. This is completely right, but there is more.

Twenty-five years ago while in the States, I suffered from chronic rheumatism. For a period of time I had been asking the Lord to show me when it was right to pray for my healing, so that His name would be glorified. (That is how I often prayed in those days!) During a time of Communion in our church I felt the Lord saying to me, "Now is the time to pray for healing". I had never heard about healing during Communion. The practice then in America was for small, individual glasses and wafers on a platter to be passed around the people in the pews. Then by waiting until all were served, all participated in Communion at the same time. There was no pastor close to me, no one laid hands on me and there was no prayer offered. Quietly I prayed for healing myself, before taking Communion. Within a couple of hours all rheumatism was gone!

The next morning I was to lead praise and worship at a charismatic

conference with a Greek Orthodox bishop. I was uncertain of his theology and was a bit worried about it. To my amazement, the first thing he taught that Monday morning was healing through Communion. I felt my heart rejoice with a great big "Amen!"

He told us that in his home church in California about 3000 people gathered every Sunday for Mass, which lasted three to four hours. The service was full of praise and worship and the gifts of the Holy Spirit were in operation. People were taught to reach out to Jesus during Communion if they needed salvation, forgiveness, healing, deliverance or anything else. They had Communion every Sunday, and most of the testimonies came from those times. This bishop's ministry time at the conference was one of the most powerful I had experienced up to that moment. He never touched people when praying for them for healing or for being filled with the Holy Spirit. He simply blew very softly on them and the Spirit of God came and performed the miracle. Still he said, "In our church, most of the miracles take place during Communion".

A well-known pastor open-heartedly shared in his preaching what he had done wrong. He was on a ministry trip and had been counselling a man who had been involved with pornography on the Internet. Later when the pastor was sitting at his computer a pornographic advertisement popped up on the screen. Before he could stop it, more pictures appeared.

He then found that, while praying before he was to preach, he could still see those pictures in his mind's eye. He went out and bought wafers and grape juice and celebrated Communion in front of the computer screen in his hotel room. He had a covenant meal, where he promised the Lord that he would never again look at anything unclean on the Internet. Once he had shared this with others, they, too, went home and followed his example to gain victory over sin.

You can take Communion yourself at home or go to a service where they are celebrating it, to deal deliberately with sin. Thus you too can affirm the Lord's covenant and live in purity. Of course, Communion can deal with other areas where you need to be an overcomer. For example, a woman once told me that, alone at home, she has taken Communion after having nightmares, and has slept well afterwards.

There are many powerful testimonies of healing during Communion. It is a time when you can reach out to Jesus with all your needs. What

happens is between you and God: you do not need a priest, pastor or anyone else to pray specifically during Communion. Here everyone can touch Jesus, without the pastor or congregation necessarily even understanding about healing and deliverance. Mark 6:56b says, "... and all who touched him were healed".

A pastor related how he and his family often celebrate Communion at home to remind themselves of Jesus' complete victory on the cross. He has also made use of it when facing difficult situations. When people have phoned him in the middle of the night with a crisis, he and his wife have sometimes taken Communion to remind themselves that the Almighty God can handle the situation.

5. Prayer and fasting

The world's biggest congregation of about 750,000 members is in Seoul, South Korea. Pastor Yonggi Cho has always advocated prayer and fasting. To all questions concerning the secrets of the success of the church he replies, "Prayer". "Prayer Mountain" is a place with many small caves where people can step aside for a few days to devote themselves to prayer and fasting. In this way they can pray through a situation or an area in their lives that needs to be touched by God's transforming power.

A pastor who had been in bondage to pornography even after receiving prayer a number of times, gained deliverance and release when he fasted and prayed.

Genesis 32 describes how Jacob struggled for a whole night with God saying, "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (verse 26). In our stressful situations and lifestyles we would do very well to step aside and quietly come before God.

6. Prayers of agreement

Matthew 18:19 says, "I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven".

Personally, I have more experience with this way of dealing with a specific area needing change. After taking time with God in repentance

and prayer for forgiveness and change, I then call a sister in the Lord whom I trust. I apply James 5:16: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed". We agree and pray together that God will change me and fill me with His Spirit.

All Christians need someone to agree with them in prayer. If you have understanding and revelation, a prayer partner can in one sense be just as much help as a counsellor. Friends are easier to get hold of, anyway!

Deuteronomy 32:30 tells how one can put a thousand and two can put ten thousand to flight, when the Lord is there. Apply this heavenly multiplication by prayers of agreement.

How can you help someone?

What do you do when someone you know obviously needs help in any of the areas about which you have read? Start by praying! For people to be helped, they themselves need to be open to seek help and to receive it. They will then also be willing to fight to keep the freedom the Lord gives them. Over the years I have had people around me to whom I have been prepared to give everything to help them find freedom. But my faith, experience or anointing – however you want to express it – has not been sufficient. Only when a person is willing to walk in God's ways, deal with sin and forgive, can God's power to transform be released. Only when individuals stop blaming others for their circumstances, take responsibility before God for their own lives, and confess their need for grace, forgiveness and help, can change begin.

In society's various rehabilitation systems for those with addictions is a foundational requirement that the person admit to himself and others that he has a problem. The absolute condition for a criminal to be shown any mercy is that he confess his guilt. Mercy is not given on the basis that it is someone else's fault, or that a person is misunderstood or treated unjustly. The same principle applies in the spiritual life. The absolute condition to receiving God's grace and forgiveness is to confess our sin, lay down our pride and ask for forgiveness.

Let us look again at some key verses in the Bible. Second Chronicles 7:14: "...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their

land." First John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." This is the prerequisite for lasting change.

If you know someone who really needs help, obviously you can encourage, share testimonies and invite the person to a church service. But the most important thing of all is to pray for the person. This allows the Holy Spirit to go into action to work on the person's will and circumstances.

Some steps you can take:

- Deal with your own lack of love.
- Stand in the gap for the person's sin.
- Bind whatever seeks to disrupt in the spiritual realm.
- Strive to be like Jesus, but recognise that you are not the Holy Spirit!
- Pray for wisdom to say the right thing at the right time.

I explain these steps more fully below.

Deal with your own lack of love

First and foremost you should pray for the person who needs help. This you do, not only so that God's power will be released over the person, but also so that you will be filled with God's love for him or her. Without God's love, our attempts are more often than not thwarted.

It is easy to understand the parable that Jesus told about the splinter in our brother's eye. But what does He mean about the beam in our own eye? Maybe the beam in our eye is the loveless reactions we have toward the brother with the splinter in his eye. Without a doubt there is something wrong with him, but our reaction to him is not completely right either. We can be cool, critical, bitter or even spiteful, and speak badly about him. All these are variations of the foundation of lovelessness. If we speak to him about his splinter with a beam still in our own eye, it will only encourage him to take up the same attitude towards us. Jesus said that we should first take out the beam in our eye. We must admit that our loveless reactions are sin, and bring this lack of love to Calvary. Then we can face the other person with a humble heart. Only when we have taken the steps to humility can we see clearly enough to help in removing the splinter from our brother's eye. Then we can humbly and lovingly help him to see, and lead him to the blood of Christ

where he will find deliverance. If he is humble, he will be thankful for your help, and he will understand that it is not offered with a selfish motive but only out of love for him.

We need each other! We all have areas where darkness would remain if we did not walk in the light with each other. Yes, we are here to help equip each other in God, but let us do it in love!

Stand in the gap

By standing in the gap for others' sins we can prepare the way for their salvation and restoration. In Ezekiel 22:30 the expression "stand in the gap" is found, referring to the Lord Himself seeking someone to stand in the gap. We have been reconciled to God through Christ, who has stood in the gap for us, and now we are also called to the ministry of reconciliation and to minister according to 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Jesus prayed on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). While Saul looked on with approval, Stephen, a follower of Jesus, was stoned to death as he prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). In this same way we can stand in the gap for others' sins and pave the way for their salvation and restoration, just as Jesus paved the way for us on the cross, and Stephen for Saul, who later became Paul the Apostle.

We have talked about standing in the gap in prayer, or as a representative of our families and inherited family weaknesses, so that the power of sin will lose its hold over us. It is then up to us to retain our freedom. Here, I am using the expression of standing in the gap as interceding for others. This paves the way and removes hindrances for others to meet Jesus, just as the lame man's four friends made a hole in the roof for him to get to Jesus. We can clear the way by our prayers, but the meeting with Jesus is personal.

Another dimension is to stand in the gap for another person or group, in order to ask for forgiveness. In chapter nine I mentioned Youth With A Mission asking the nations on the route of the Crusades for forgiveness. In their task of reconciliation they asked forgiveness for wrongs done 900 years previously. These kinds of intercessory actions have now taken place in several parts of the world. Forgiveness is asked for the evil which has been committed in different locations, so that there is freedom for the gospel to be proclaimed.

This can also happen on a personal level. We can stand in the gap for someone who has committed violent wrongs, and ask God to forgive him. This releases the power of reconciliation, which is the key to restoration. Let me give you an example. On various occasions I have ministered to Jews who were imprisoned in the concentration camps of the Second World War. At such times I have asked our Bible teacher, who comes from Germany, to represent the German people and to ask for forgiveness. Being offered a representative makes it a lot easier for hurt people to be able to forgive and to be reconciled.

When I have counselled a woman who has been abused by men, I have asked a male co-worker to help with the prayer of reconciliation. He then often kneels and represents the male offender – relative or other – and asks for forgiveness. In the same way our pastor has helped when someone has been spiritually abused.

In the story at the end of chapter three of the unsaved man in a wheelchair and his wife, I took their hands and asked for forgiveness for the Christians that had been too preoccupied with their own things. The couple cried, as well as the congregation, when love was released to them. This opened a way to their hearts. On various occasions I have asked unsaved people for forgiveness on behalf of Christians. God has called us to a ministry of reconciliation!

Binding in the spiritual realm

Where there is demonic influence in a person's life, you as an intercessor cannot simply command it to leave. The person must renounce that involvement with the evil powers which have gained authority to work in him or her. The vacated area can then be filled with God's Spirit. Matthew 12:43-45 explains the necessity to be filled with the Holy Spirit to retain our freedom.

As an intercessor, what you can do, however, is bind the powers of darkness, rendering them inactive. In this way you pave the way for the person to seek freedom. Matthew 18:18 speaks about loosing and binding: "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." See Matthew 16:19 as well. My understanding of this is that we can either permit or prohibit something in the spiritual realm.

In prayer, you could say something like this: "In Jesus' name, I bind

the power of the enemy to torment (name) with anger, hatred, rejection.... I bless (name) with peace, joy and love...."

Strive to be like Jesus

You are called to be like Jesus in your family, with your relatives, at your school and at your work place. Jesus loved people just as they were, without demanding a change in order for them to receive His love. Unconditional love.

It is the Holy Spirit's work to bring conviction of sin, remind us what we have heard from God and His Word, to bring us to the whole truth, to bring revelation, etc.. If you take on the role of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin to someone, you are doing him or her a disservice. It makes it much easier for the person to escape by becoming threatening and walking away. It is not so easy to escape from the Holy Spirit. Pray for God's heart and love for that person and you will see how resourceful the love of Jesus is. God also wants to give you wisdom to say the right thing at the right time.

One day on the way home from church a little girl turned to her mother and said, "Mummy, the preacher's sermon this morning confused me."

"Oh? Why is that?" asked the mother.

The girl replied, "He said that God is bigger than we are. Is that true?"

"Yes, that's true," the mother replied.

"He also said that God lives inside us. Is that true too?"

Again the mother replied, "Yes."

"Well," said the girl. "If God is bigger than us and He lives in us, wouldn't He stick out here and there?"

This is, in fact, what it means to be Christlike!

God depends on our prayers!

When God created man and gave us a free will and the authority to rule over the earth, He also gave away His right to intervene whenever He might want to do so. "The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man." (Psalm 115:16)

Adam and Eve chose disobedience and thereby aligned themselves with the enemy and gave him power in their lives. In Luke chapter four we read how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Satan showed Jesus the kingdoms of this world and offered Him the power over them if Jesus would worship Him. In verse six we read what Satan said: "I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to ...". This is the reason for all the evil, terror, disease, violence and suffering in the world. Many say, "If God is good, if God is love, how then can the world be like this? How can God allow it?" The answer is that man's free will and selfishness, hatred and desire for power have messed things up and God cannot intervene against our free will. He does not force Himself on us; He does not resort to violence, but waits to be invited. God will not do what we can and should do. God has chosen to make Himself dependent on people and on our prayers to intervene in situations, and He is dependent on our repentance and reconciliation in order to transform our lives, as we have already talked about. He has also made Himself dependent on our words to re-create our lives, which we will look at in a later chapter. (See Proverbs 18:21.)

Psalm 29:1 says that we are to "ascribe to the Lord glory and strength" (power and authority). This is where prayer comes in. God has chosen to make Himself dependent on our response to Him. He intervenes in response to prayer – this gives Him the right to step in! In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches the disciples to say: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ...". When we mean this with all our heart we are inviting Him to work amongst us. We pray for our own needs, but also for others who do not pray for themselves, and according to His instruction we pray for the governments and authorities over us. Think about this: God has chosen to make Himself dependent on your prayers. You are God's partner so that He can work here on earth.

Supernatural knowledge

You have now read of many situations where supernatural knowledge from God has helped many people to freedom. A word of knowledge is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is discussed in 1 Corinthians 12. You could also call these gifts keys to restoration. If you receive

words or pictures you should test them carefully. You can let them remain in your mind for some time. If something is only your imagination it will soon go, while if it is from the Holy Spirit, it tends to stay until you do something with it.

Neither you nor I can force our revelations on anyone with whom we have contact. Carefully test what the word of revelation means. If you have recently started using the gifts of the Spirit, the words you receive are often for you firstly. If what you receive concerns someone else, you should pray about it without saying anything (just as the pastor's wife prayed for me for many years). Do not say, "Thus saith the Lord . . .", or, "The Lord has revealed to me . . .", because it can cause pressure, leading to confusion and mental blocks. If you have actually made a mistake, it could result in many problems. If it is from the Lord it will become very evident anyway.

Sometimes I receive a word of knowledge before an appointment, so I write it on a piece of paper, which I keep out of sight. I will then ask some questions. If I feel that the word is right, I say something like this, "What comes to mind when I say this . . .?", or, "I have a word in my mind. Does it mean anything to you?" If the person says it is not appropriate, I drop it. Either it is wrong or the person does not want to deal with it right then. It can also be something which is repressed and will come up later. Sometimes circumstances and information eventually reveal that it was right.

Do not tell others about the great words you receive. If you are faithful in the little you will receive more. You will be tested to see if the Lord can trust you and if you are reliable. Go about His business quietly, with integrity and humility. That builds a good foundation to stand on when you serve the Lord.

The prayers that we suggest in different situations contain no special technique that works in itself. Only when you reach out to God in faith with all your heart, can something happen. Remember that it is the anointing which breaks the yoke (Isaiah 10:27).

Over the years that I have received words of knowledge from the Lord while ministering to people's needs, illnesses, etc., I have seen a pattern. It is not like playing Bingo, where if you are lucky a certain number you have will be called. God sees those who are expectant in Him and He gives a message to His servants. The Lord is also very

interested in people getting saved and will gladly show His love and power to them.

 *"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."* James 4:8

Chapter 18

The occult

It is my experience that, sadly, we have offered far too little practical teaching in our churches on subjects found in this book, especially relating to the occult and sex outside marriage. Many have been tormented completely unnecessarily through ignorance, when a short, simple prayer could have changed their lives. Strongholds, or demonic fortresses, which give the enemy a right to torment us, are:

- conscious, unconfessed sin
- unforgiveness
- the occult
- sex outside marriage

What does the Bible say?

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 says: "Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead."

Exodus 20:3-6 says: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Galatians 5:19-20 says: "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft..."

Today the occult is found around us in many forms. Wherever we turn, we are met with bold offers, inviting us to horoscopes, healing and witchcraft of many and varied types. Much is found under the "mantle" of New Age. TV advertisements, shows and fairs have the spice of the occult to offer. There are even shops specialising in occult objects.

Idols and the occult constantly surrounded the children of Israel and caused their greatest struggles. Often they were enticed into idol worship, which led to bondage. Maybe today it is easier than ever to end up in the occult or to be affected by it. All Christians need to be aware of this in order to keep themselves pure and uncontaminated.

Elijah challenged the children of Israel on Mount Carmel, as they stood before 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asher. First Kings 18:21 tells us: "Elijah came near all the people and said, How long will you halt and limp between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him! But if Baal, then follow him. But the people did not answer him a word." Following that came the historical "showdown" where the prophets of Baal were challenged to call down fire on the altar. They were not successful. After pouring water on his altar, Elijah called down fire from heaven, and not only was the sacrifice consumed by fire but the altar as well. The Lord is God! As a result of this the children of Israel worshipped Him again. (The complete record is found in 1 Kings 18:16-40.)

Are you like the children of Israel, "limping between two opinions" – knowingly or unknowingly? According to Ben Shalit, the chief psychologist of the Israeli army, there are three criteria that need to be met for a person to be able to participate in a situation of war. They are:

- The person needs to understand *what is at stake*.
- He needs to feel personally affected.
- He needs to have an understanding that he is able to do something about the situation.

I am sure that you know what is at stake in your life, and that you feel personally affected by the circumstances in which you are. What I would like to show you also is how you can do something about the situation!

Checklist for occult contamination

Usually we ask all individuals coming for counselling whether they have been involved in the occult. If the answer is no, we let them read the checklist below, and often they are surprised to see that they have actually been involved in various things connected to the occult. When such involvement is exposed it can be taken before God, confessed,

renounced and God's forgiveness received. The Lord wants to release us from the bondages and to replace the negative patterns in our life with His Holy Spirit.

We can end up in these bondages through our own choice, but also from getting involved ignorantly, through relatives, teachers, friends and others. We can be affected through our psyche or our senses through our eyes: films, TV, computers, literature and so on; through sound: music, radio, conversations, etc.; through touch, taste or smell: drugs, incense, etc.. The line between the "psyche" and the occult can be difficult to define, but simply put, the occult involves Satan and his evil powers. The "psychic ability" on the other hand – in the way I use the term here – is the power potential in us which, because of the fall of man, God intended to be closed. Psychic powers can develop in us voluntarily or involuntarily, and through these we can be susceptible to Satan's pressure without understanding why. As Christians this kind of ability needs to be replaced by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Psychic abilities and the gifts of the Holy Spirit should not be used together!

The following list is not exhaustive, as the enemy is constantly bringing up new ways to bring people into bondage, but it covers most areas. As you go through the list, ask yourself: "Have I or my family (on the sides of both parents, and earlier generations) been involved in any of these things?"

- Have you actively denied the foundations of our faith (the Trinity of God, Jesus as God, the resurrection, the cross, the blood of Jesus Christ, the fact that we are sinners, or the reality of the power of evil)?
- Have you sought for the truth in philosophical ideas or in any "-isms" (Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.)?
- Have you believed in false teachings or been involved in religious sects and cults?
- Have you been involved in secret rituals and associations, or made promises, which have gone against your commitment to Jesus Christ?
- Have you been involved in horoscopes or fortune-telling, either to find direction or "just for fun"?
- Even expert opinions can bring bondage in a similar way to fortune-telling. Have you been "diagnosed" by someone for something related to your body, soul or spirit?

- Have you been involved in pagan rituals, rites, worship services, or visited temples where these things are practised?
- Has someone spoken out a curse on you or your family? Have you yourself tried to curse or bewitch someone? Have you entertained a death wish, concerning you or someone else?
- When sick, have you sought healing, been diagnosed, or treated by anyone with psychic powers or with other alternative methods?
- Have you practised "superstition" in some form (even if you do not believe in it), like broken mirrors bringing bad luck, not walking under ladders, or throwing salt over your shoulder for protection? Old wives tales fall under this section too!
- Do you have in your possession any books related to these subjects?
- Have you seen any films or videos that concern these areas?
- Have you listened to unclean or "dark" music? Have you played computer games, TV games, role-played or visited Internet sites, which you know would not please God?
- Do you have in your home any artefacts, ornaments, African masks, or souvenirs from trips, which depict the occult, death or symbols from other religions?

The road to deliverance from occult bondage

All occult involvement needs to be identified as disobedience to God, renounced and confessed as sin. Every form of occult involvement needs to be named, as you remember it, then confess it as sin and ask for forgiveness in Jesus' name. See it as an added blessing to ask for forgiveness for those things which you have not remembered!

It is necessary to renounce all occult involvement in Jesus' name and to command all the powers of darkness and Satan himself to leave you alone. Jesus did this in His own authority (Matt. 16:23), and just as His disciples, you can command Satan to be gone in Jesus' name (Acts 16:18), both from yourself and others.

Here are some simple steps:

- Pray with a repentant heart for God's forgiveness. Confess each sin specifically (1 John 1:9) and claim God's forgiveness.
- Renounce each occult involvement in the power of Jesus' name.

- Plead the cleansing blood of Jesus over every sin.
- Accept freedom and deliverance by faith. Do not go on feelings or "signs", but hold on to God's Word, and the confirmation and assurance will come. Plead the blood of Christ and proclaim His victory on the cross. Satan knows that he needs to relinquish his prey when he is commanded to do this in Jesus' name. This does not mean that you can always see the results immediately. Firmly proclaim your deliverance in faith, "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

"Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor. 4:2)

Experiences of deliverance

Following are some testimonies which highlight the importance of dealing with the occult in our lives and standing in the gap for any of our ancestors who have been involved. When we as Christians leave these things behind us but do not specifically confess and renounce what we have been involved in, the devil still has a right to torment us. One such result could be that we feel physically or psychologically unwell when we come into contact with the occult.

Seances in the house

I was part of a team which had gone to a Bible school to teach on personal reconciliation and forgiveness. The students were asked to make a list of things they felt needed to be dealt with through prayer. We then divided the students into two groups so that our team could minister to them individually.

One group came back for the coffee break completely upset. They had gone to another house to meet, and of the eight students in the group, only one knew why she was there. The others were confused and did not want to confess anything! Our team members, however, were not at all concerned. We asked the Lord the reason for the confusion and several received the same answer: In the house where this group had met, there had been spiritist seances. We immediately con-

tacted the caretaker who informed us that the building had been rented out to a group of people in response to the rental advertisement. When we told him what had taken place, he said that it explained why there had been great conflict the previous weekend. A church had hired the premises and at one point the group had split up into discussion groups. The group which had used that building got into tremendous disagreement and it all became quite a mess.

On hearing this, seven of the eight students admitted that they had been involved in some form of the occult. Consequently, when they entered the spiritist atmosphere in the house, they became confused. Just as we were about to begin the ministry, one of the intercessors said to me, "Anita, pray for me because I have just realised that I played with a ouija board once." It was just as well that she remembered, or she would have been confused too!

At the end of the chapter I will share on how to pray for a "haunted house".

A ouija board and a satanic "bible"

It was through playing a game with a ouija board that a man began his walk into the occult. While at a trade school, he spent a whole night seeking contact with spirits through playing the ouija board, and later borrowed a Satanist bible from a friend.

After a few months he realised how caught up in the occult he had become. All his spare time was given to reading about it. He became anti-social, locked the door, pulled down the blinds and just read the book.

His mother was a believer, which could explain why he came to realise that his life was being wasted. He gave back the book to his friend with the words, "This book has only cursed my life!" Interestingly, the friend was not happy to get it back as he had also seen how it had trapped him.

If we give the enemy a finger, he will take an arm – without asking for permission. This is just what the man experienced. He thought it was a short period of his life when he had gone overboard in one area, but not long after handing back the book, things became serious. One morning he woke up to find that his whole apartment had been wrecked, he was bloody and his arms scratched and bleeding. He had no idea what had

happened as he had been alone all night behind a locked door. But he had opened his life to the occult world, and now began experiencing many other strange occurrences which he found very alarming. The years went by and the demonic manifestations lessened somewhat, but he became psychologically unstable and felt terrible. One night he prayed to God, "You must take control of my life because I can't handle this anymore!"

The man was saved and some time later moved to our city. Generally, he felt very happy and blessed, but at times he sensed in himself a certain bondage. I explained to the man about renouncing the things of the occult and standing in the gap for his family and ancestors. He confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness.

After a time of prayer, he felt a definite release and complete freedom from bondage. Later, he commented that it was no longer exciting to talk about the occult, as it had been before. "I have also received a completely new boldness in witnessing for Jesus", he added.

If you have not closed the door to the occult, you may find you have a curiosity and an attraction remaining, even though you are not actively involved and are following Jesus. If, like this man, you have been involved in darkness, you need help through prayer to be set free and to close all doors to the occult for good.

While giving a study on the occult, a teacher asked one of the boys in her class, "Can people predict the future with cards?"

"My mother can", was the immediate response.

The teacher replied, "Really?"

The young boy was quick to explain. "Yes, she takes one look at my report card and tells me what will happen when my father gets home."

Tourists in a Buddhist country

A young family from our church came home from a vacation in South East Asia. Within a few days of returning, the wife began suffering from severe pains and a stiff neck. A doctor gave her two types of painkillers, recommended physiotherapy and told her she should expect a long recovery period.

I heard about this and felt that I should visit the family and ask a certain question. "What did you do on your trip that was connected with Buddhism?" I queried. The man told how he had bought a garland of orchids and placed it around his wife's neck. Only later did they learn that these garlands were sold to hang as sacrifices at the small house altars and temples, which you find everywhere in Thailand.

The family asked forgiveness and renounced all involvement in Buddhism. We then prayed that the pain would leave, and within a few moments the woman was completely free of it! By the next day all stiffness was gone too. Since then she has had no more problems.

It is important to deal with all occultism in order to be healed. After people have confessed any such involvement as sin, I have seen many powerful interventions of God.

Occult objects

Many who have travelled on mission trips and confronted other religions have come home with diseases in their bodies. Sometimes there are explanations as to how doors have been opened to the enemy in their lives and he has taken advantage of his right to attack. Souvenirs are often idols or objects of worship. We need to be very careful about souvenirs from countries where other religions are practised. There is an awareness that, via tourism, religions can be exported and people influenced. A cute little souvenir of an elephant from India could possibly be an idol of the elephant god. The same goes for an African mask or sculptures of faces and other symbols. Beads, amulets and anklets can also be instruments carrying curses and causing bondage.

When our family first heard teaching about this, we found in our own home over 30 objects which had a direct connection with other religions. Most of the objects had been purchased in the States but can be found almost anywhere. A literal "spring cleaning" is the best solution! This includes books, records, CDs, videos, etc.. Acts 19:19 is a good example for us: "A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas." A drachma at that time was equivalent to a day's wage, so the value was great that went up in smoke that day – to the praise of God and people's deliverance! The closer we come to the Lord, the more sensitive we become

to unclean objects.

Deuteronomy 7:25 and 26 says: "The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the Lord your God. Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you will be set apart for destruction, even as it is. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction." Strong admonition indeed!

Healing in a bottle

A young woman had been battling with symptoms which the doctors could not understand. She eventually visited a "traditional healer", who gave her some herbs in a small, sealed, glass bottle with a note inside, to wear around her neck on a leather thong. He told her that if she removed the bottle, the illness would return. She later became a Christian and some other Christians noticed the bottle around her neck. One evening at a meeting they questioned her about it and she told them what it was. They asked if they could remove it and pray for her, and she agreed. Once the bottle was removed from her neck, someone shattered the bottle on the floor. Inside, the note read, "I have healed you for now, to have you for eternity". She was flabbergasted at this! She renounced all demonic influence over her life after first asking for forgiveness for seeking healing through these means. No symptoms ever returned and she has been serving the Lord now for over ten years.

Death wish

In the checklist for occult involvement is the question about entertaining a death wish. This influence can also originate from a completely external factor such as environment or living place where occult rituals may have taken place at some time. You would then need to pray as shown below. Dark thoughts can also originate from shocks and difficult circumstances. When there are thoughts of suicide, actual attempted suicide, or suicide in the family, a very definite response is needed. Suicide involves making a covenant with death as a friend or a way of escape. This covenant must be consciously broken and renounced or annulled. People who, after accepting Jesus as their Saviour, have entertained a death wish or thoughts of suicide, or who have even at-

tempted suicide, often mention that they have an unhealthy longing for heaven. If suicide has been committed in the family, later generations are plagued by dark thoughts. The enemy's rights must be revoked!

How should you pray?

We recommend that you pray with someone who is spiritually mature, trusted and acknowledged as an authority in the church. After asking for the protection of the blood of Jesus over yourself, your family (or others connected to you) and your possessions, you can say something like this:

"I stand in the gap as a representative of my family and ask for forgiveness for _____ (insert name) who has committed suicide. I confess this as sin and ask for forgiveness on behalf of my family and myself for this covenant with death, which made death a friend and a way of escape. I renounce any such covenant for myself and my descendants, in the name of Jesus. Thank You for the eternal covenant I have with You, Jesus, Lord of life! It is You to whom I give myself. Thank You for forgiveness, cleansing, freedom and life! In Jesus' name, amen."

Sometimes a suicide or attempted suicide in the past is known in the family, but often it is not. Many know little or nothing about the past generations. As no harm will come to you if you pray inaccurately, it could be safer to do it than to leave it undone!

What do you do with a haunted house?

What do you do with a haunted house – board it up, sell it or break it down? None of these. You pray! This most often concerns apartments and houses into which Christians move. I have been involved with many, where we have been able to "spring clean" homes.

Once we stayed for a few days at the summer cottage of some friends. The house had a "funny feel" about it, and especially in the entrance hall it felt particularly unpleasant. We prayed and asked God what had happened. Amongst other things, we felt that a violent act had been committed in the entrance hall. We placed ourselves in the gap as representatives and asked God for forgiveness for that act. We then simply commanded the forces of darkness to leave and prayed for God's peace to fill the house. The owners later confirmed what we had experienced

and told us they had difficulty sleeping there. Nine years have passed since we prayed. God's peace had come immediately when we prayed, and no family member has had trouble sleeping there since.

Recently some older members of the family attended a family get-together. They had grown up at this place and during the conversation one of the women recounted how scared they had always been to be alone, especially in the entrance hall, when their mother went out to the barn. They said that they were a Christian family and had prayed for the house, but had not known how to pray in this way. They were much impressed because peace had come at last to their summer cottage.

Below are some points which are important to consider when praying for haunted houses.

- Try to gather as many facts about the place as possible. What has taken place further back in time? What kind of people has lived there? Is there a pagan or demonic influence? Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring revelation and light.
- Pray with a group! These assignments should not be taken on alone, but with fellow believers, under the authority of the church. In Matthew 16:19 Jesus says, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven". This promise is based on the fact of who Jesus is, and on this revelation He builds His church and gives authority to it (verses 16-18).
- Pray for the protection of the blood of Jesus over yourselves as the intercessors, your families, your church, your possessions, etc.. (See Revelation 12:11.)
- Praise God for His greatness, that He is almighty and that He has won the victory on the cross over the enemy. Spend a good amount of time in praise and worship, with thanksgiving!
- Pray for reconciliation and deliverance. The late Kjell Sjöberg, a well-known Swedish prayer warrior, often taught that the most powerful form of spiritual warfare is the prayer of reconciliation – standing in the gap for what has happened in a place and asking God for forgiveness. In this way the enemy loses his right. No loud prayers are needed to command the powers of darkness to leave.
- Lastly, ask God's presence and peace to fill the house.

A testimony about a haunted house

A missionary couple had worked in one location for a number of years on the mission field, and now the time had come to move on and start a new church in a vastly populated city.

They moved into a big house which had been renovated recently, but the garden was very overgrown, suggesting that it had been a long time since anyone had lived there. The couple held a dedication ceremony for the house, with many of the leaders on the mission field attending. A woman evangelist moved in with the little family, meetings were advertised and brochures and tracts were distributed. Life carried them along with much joy in starting the new work, but they were to learn that no victories were easily won there.

They soon all began to sense a vague discomfort, which only increased as the weeks went by. They became nervous and often felt afraid. Strange things started happening. Doors would open but no one was there. The high shuttle windows would be pulled up and down and furniture moved around, usually twice every 24 hours. Naïve and inexperienced as these missionaries were, they continued to think all this must have some natural explanation.

Things got worse. Their daughter, who was one year old at that stage, was especially attacked. Her pacifier would be ripped out of her mouth and thrown with force against the wall. She was pushed out of her walking ring and badly bruised. Their dog would growl and the hair stand up on his neck as he stared into the night as if he was seeing something. Dragging footsteps would be heard outside and the screen doors would open slowly with no one there.

They began to realise that evil spirits must exist, whereas previously they had always explained away such things as the imaginings of stressed people. Right then they felt they just wanted to run away. They were full of fear. But one of their fellow missionaries sensed that God was saying that as long as they were fearful the devil had the upper hand. Finally they agreed to get together with some of the other missionaries, pray and command the devil to leave. They went from room to room, commanding the spirits to leave, pleading the blood of Jesus over every part of the building. They stood in unity and sensed that what they did was powerful.

The change could be felt immediately. The house, which had been so

full of demonic activity, became peaceful and calm. Only once did a spirit try to return a few weeks after being commanded to leave. It came in through the front door, walked through the house and out the back. The back door was violently slammed shut and the couple could sense the rage with which it left. It could not stay there as the blood of Jesus had overcome it! Thank God for His victory on the cross over all darkness!

People in the area were amazed. Why did the foreigners stay on? The house was known throughout town to be haunted, and the locals were afraid even to go near it. Now the change became a powerful testimony to them. The house which had been a stronghold for Satan soon became a place where God revealed Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church grew so much that eventually the house was razed to the ground and replaced by an eight-storey building. This new edifice had an auditorium, a youth hall and Sunday school rooms, as well as apartments for some of the church workers.

 *"Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead."* Deuteronomy 18:10-11

Chapter 19

Sex outside marriage

What does God's Word say?

I have already mentioned that involvement in the occult and in sex outside marriage means we are stepping outside God's created order. In creation there is an established protection for man against demonic torment, and the enemy cannot do whatever he wants. However, when we operate outside the laws given us by God, we enter the enemy's territory and he has a right to torment us. Proverbs 10:8b says, "...whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake".

There has been very little teaching in our churches in the area of extra-marital sex. In these days, when almost all moral boundaries have been erased, it is very important that we say what God's Word really says. We need to teach the consequences of disobedience to God's Word. The Ten Commandments, in Exodus 20, state that we must not commit adultery. In Galatians 5:19-20 the deeds of the flesh are listed, that is, the things that do not please God, such as adultery, impurity, loose and perverse ways, orgies and carousing.

Many think today that it is old fashioned to give so-called moral sermons about the above subjects. What was written two thousand years ago is not relevant for today, they say. And we are free, are we not? Yes, unfortunately many Christians think this way. But the Bible makes it clear that sexual sin has severe consequences. Of course, it is not more difficult to be forgiven for such sin! Different sins just have different consequences. Drunken driving has one set of consequences, while cheating on your income tax declaration has others; gluttony has its consequences and bitterness can lead to illness. Galatians 6:7-8 tells us we reap what we sow: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

Consequences in the soul

1. Burn-out

In creation God has laid down a healthy, natural, sexual desire, which is intended for marriage. A friend of mine who works at a youth clinic and teaches on this subject at schools, uses the following illustration. Sex as part of married life can be compared to spices in food. Added to a meal, the spices come into their own. On the contrary, if you eat the spice alone, you will be burned. Similarly, if you forget about the marriage relationship and only want the "spice", you will soon get burned. You cannot live only on spice. It will not fill you up, and you will remain unsatisfied.

The symptom of today's youth who practise this so-called free sexual life is burn-out. Reports from the States reveal that such teenagers lose their joy of living. In a recent TV programme on the subject, an 18-year-old girl said that she and many of her friends had become tired of sex! Even before their teenage years were over, they were burnt out in an area of enjoyment that should have still been ahead of them. We hear alarming reports of teenagers who are depressed and suicidal because what was supposed to make them feel good has instead led to negative emotions, and they wonder what is wrong with them.

My experience as a counsellor in this area comes mainly from talking with women. It seems common that a woman who has had many sexual encounters before becoming a Christian or making a complete commitment to God, continues to perceive anything connected with sexuality to be dirty, sinful and shameful, even after marriage. God wants anyone affected like this to be set free, restored and released from the oppression of shame and guilt.

In the chapter on sexual abuse I explained how the paralysis of the natural emotions can be caused by a shock of this kind. It may not seem very noticeable as long as the person is influenced by a spirit of lust, but this emotional paralysis will often become evident in a Christian marriage. The natural emotions can also be affected by burn-out after many pre-marital sexual relationships.

Our enemy wants us to experience as much as possible sexually before marriage, in order to lose interest later within marriage, which is where God intended the experience. In this way he manages to steal,

kill and destroy what God intended (John 10:10). But the Lord wants to deliver, heal and restore. He is longing to do it. At the end of this chapter I will give some advice on how to pray for this.

2. A spirit of lust gains entry

In the act of sex outside marriage, we actually give ourselves to the spirit of lust. Do not confuse this with a healthy, natural desire in marriage! Characteristics of the spirit of lust are:

- Enjoyment of and hunger for perverted or seductive sexual scenes on TV, video, the Internet, in magazines and books, unclean jokes etc..
- A driving force often leading to compulsive behaviour which the person cannot control. One can be influenced by the spirit of lust in varying degrees.
- An ability to identify the same spirit in someone else, which can lead to "love at first sight". (Of course, love at first sight can also be healthy and normal, with no spirit of lust – but test it carefully.) Someone with a seducing spirit can quickly connect with the lust in another person.
- Unfaithfulness. The spirit of lust is never faithful, but continually seeks new adventures and objects of desire. That is why bondage to this spirit is a danger in marriage, and it certainly does not belong in a Christian marriage. Being demonic, the spirit of lust does not want to uphold what God has blessed and instituted, that is, marriage, but will seek to destroy the relationship somehow. Signs within a marriage are such things as bondage to pornography and perverted sexual acts where the participants are hurt.
- The deception that sex outside marriage is attractive, exciting, fantastic. The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence, and this is why many are caught in the "treadmill" of going from one marriage to another.

Consequences in the body

1. Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV transfer

It is a known and tragic fact that Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) trouble many in our modern times. I will not go into detail about this now, as there is a lot of information available.

In Thailand, we visited a Christian orphanage for HIV positive chil-

dren born to mothers with AIDS. It was an incredible experience to be able to hold each child and pray for healing. Later, after the children had received expressions of love and prayer, about 30% of them tested negative, and could be adopted! The staff also told us about a children's home in Africa where almost all the children had been healed through supernatural intervention by our Father in heaven!

2. Unplanned pregnancies

I shall not go into detail on this subject either, but would like to refer you to pro-life organisations. In an earlier chapter on self-image, we looked at restoration for those who had been conceived outside marriage. Sadly, many mothers have chosen another way rather than saying yes to life, namely, abortion. Although perhaps relieved of an unwanted pregnancy, those who have chosen abortion carry much shame, guilt and condemnation, and there is always repressed grief. What seemed like a quick and simple way out in a crisis situation becomes a bondage. The Lord wants to lift this from the person. He hates abortion, as this is murder, but He loves every woman who has resorted to abortion! Over the years I have prayed with hundreds of women who have found themselves in this situation.

A woman suffered from deep depression for many years, and was finally delivered from it when the Holy Spirit encouraged her to confess as sin the abortion she had had 25 years previously. For the first time she spoke about it, confessed it as sin, asked for forgiveness and was set free. Repressed, unconfessed sin sooner or later makes itself known and creates problems in the soul.

There are many testimonies of women who have been restored and who have been able to leave their guilt and condemnation resulting from an abortion. We have also prayed with men who encouraged abortion rather than fathering a child. Remember the teaching in chapter six: bring it into the light; it will then lose its power to condemn and judge.

How do you pray?

- Confess before God that the foetus was not just abstract tissue, but an actual child.
- Confess as sin that a life was taken, and ask for forgiveness.
- Commit the child to the Lord, and thank Him that he or she is in

heaven. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to little children!

- Thank God for His forgiveness and express forgiveness to yourself for what was done, and for those who were involved in the decision.
- Release the resulting shocks and trauma of the event.
- Break all consequences of the abortion on the children born after it.

3. Psychosomatic illnesses

After all my years of counselling I can say that many women have a root of self-hatred and condemnation which often has its origin in youthful sexual sin. The result is broken-down health and psychosomatic illnesses. The key to good health in such a case is dealing with shame and self-hatred.

Consequences in the spiritual life

1. Condemnation, shame and guilt

Sexual sins open the door for condemnation, shame, self-hatred, hatred of your own body, and so on. Sins like these can be confessed a hundred times without the sinner feeling forgiven. In God's eyes you were forgiven from the first time you asked for forgiveness (1 John 1:9), but you also need to renounce and be set free from the spirits of condemnation, impurity, etc.. When we operate on the enemy's territory, he makes sure that he darkens our spirits, hindering us from being overcomers in our spiritual lives.

2. Spiritual transference and contamination

It is well known within some religions, sects and Satanism that the sexual act in various forms transfers power. In Satanism one of the ways to increase one's power is to have sexual intercourse with someone who has more power. At the same time, it is a way for the more powerful person to control the weaker one. Within the Children of God sect, a recruitment method called "flirty fishing" is practised, where women seduce men into the sect.

In the Old Testament we read how the children of Israel often ended up in idolatry, foremost with Baal. Baal was worshipped as the fertility god, with rites involving prostitution and human sacrifice. It was mostly children that were sacrificed. There is no doubt what God thought about

that. We can say that the same happens today, only in different ways, such as the sacrifice of children through abortion. Food for thought!

During a mission trip to Albania, we visited an archaeological dig in a harbour town in Illyricum, where Paul once preached. In front of the ancient idol temple were some pools, and it was explained to us that the order of worship was first to bathe before having sex with the temple prostitutes. Through the sexual act, demonic power was transferred during this idol worship.

First Corinthians 6:16 says, "Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh"". During the sexual act two people become one. When this takes place outside marriage, the two people are connected in the spirit, which gives the enemy an opportunity to move his "pawns" around freely. He seeks ways of getting a hold on us in those times when we are outside God's protection.

One man who heard this teaching exclaimed, "Now I understand what happened to me!" He related that as a young man he had had many sexual relationships. Then he started serving the Lord and, walking in his destiny, he trained as a pastor. During this time, however, he had a relationship with a woman, which went wrong. They slept together only once, but after that the young man suffered from heart palpitations, severe anxiety and fear. He had never before been troubled like this, and it was many years before he was set free. Now he realised that during the sexual intercourse with the woman he had connected to her and "taken on" precisely what she had been experiencing.

If a Christian has had a sexual relationship with someone of another religion, it is important to renounce the powers or beliefs of that religion. For example, if the partner is a Muslim, one must renounce the spirit of Islam. The same goes for Satanism. If someone has slept with a person who has entered a covenant of religious or occult characteristics, it is necessary to renounce any involvement with these powers and to break any effects of that covenant in one's life. On a number of occasions I have ministered to people who have said that they have experienced unhealthy personality changes overnight after having had sexual intercourse. Simply put, they became part of the other person's dark side. But anyone can be set free from this, through the name of Jesus!

This type of transfer or contamination does not happen in marriage,

even if the one partner is not saved. First Corinthians 7:14 speaks about this: "For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy." (Naturally there are more ways of applying this verse, and also other interpretations.)

Possible causes of sexual perversion

- ***Pornographic films, magazines and the Internet.*** These include many ingredients which create curiosity to investigate new areas. Of course, the spirit of lust is the driving force behind all of this. To be set free, confess the sin and ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse the mind of all pornography which has been "stored" there. Concerning the Internet, do not play with fire! Do not expose yourself to unnecessary risks, but make sure that you do not "happen" across unclean sites while surfing on the net.
- ***Sexual impurity and perversion in the family line.*** We can be oppressed and affected by sexual sin from past generations in our family line. If this is the case, you can stand as a representative of your family and confess your own and their impurity as sin. Then renounce all the consequences of this and receive forgiveness and deliverance from every inherited, driving force – you do not need to live with these things!
- ***Sexual abuse from the opposite sex.*** Fear and disgust as a result of such abuse can cause a person to feel comfortable only with the same gender. Forgiveness must take place, the effects of shocks and trauma rendered powerless, and all accusations against the perpetrator stopped, for full restoration to take place.
- ***Perversion as part of the abuse of a child or teenager.*** Perversion is transferred during abuse and causes bondage. Forgive, and pray for deliverance.
- ***Disappointment with a parent who has been a bad example.*** This can cause negative emotions towards the opposite gender. Forgive the parent who has failed. Confess your bitterness as sin and pray for deliverance.
- ***Temporary connection followed by bondage.*** Sexual sin can oc-

cur when someone is in a drunken state and can lead to bondage even if it is only one incident. Confess the sin. Forgive yourself and the other person concerned who caused you to fall.

- ***Rejection in a relationship with the opposite sex.*** Because of failure in a relationship, fear can even cause someone to abandon normal relationships. Forgive and receive healing.
- ***Sexual games amongst children.*** I am not referring here to the very young and their curiosity in discovering their own bodies, but rather to slightly older children and their first sexual encounters. It has happened on a number of occasions that someone living within a good marriage relationship says, "At times I find myself having sexual fantasies that have no anchor in reality." I usually ask if the person ever participated in sexual games as a child. The answer is often yes.

As mentioned in chapter six concerning sexual abuse, it is important to receive ministry for the first sexual experiences (if they occurred outside marriage) because they often affect the person more than later experiences. If you recognise that this is the case with you, you are not abnormal. All our experiences are stored in the subconscious and sometimes surface as conscious thoughts or temptations. Ask the Lord to cleanse you from your childhood experiences and leave them behind you. Deal with every root of confusion, shame, guilt and condemnation.

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul encourages us to be mindful of the children of Israel and how they lived (verses 6-9). Also 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 warns, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body".

Repentance and reconciliation are the steps to freedom! Hebrews 3:15 states, "As has just been said: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...", and Hebrews 4:1-3a tells us that when we deal with sin we have the promise of entering into God's rest.

I am sure you understand that this subject is a particularly sensitive one, and therefore I cannot write so much about others' testimonies.

On the other hand, I can say that there are many who have had much to clean up in this area of their lives, who are today great men and women of God. God is not a respecter of persons. The important thing is not the darkness you have lived in, but what you have done with it. You can excuse yourself, blame others, compare yourself to those who are worse than you, compromise, or sin in secret, but you are still living in bondage. Instead, bring the sin into the light, call it what it is, confess it as sin and ask for forgiveness – this is freedom! It is vital then to watch over your freedom, for the enemy wants us to return to all the sin we leave behind. But submit to the Lord, resist the devil and, according to James 4:7, he will flee from you.

How should you pray?

If you are carrying any of these sins in your own "personal baggage", what should you do? Humble yourself and confess it as sin. It is important to bring previous sexual sins into the light before a marriage. If you are already married but have not dealt with your old way of life in this area, do it now. Even if you are married to the one with whom you lived an impure life before marriage, you need to confess what happened before the marriage as sin. This will release a greater foundation of blessing in your marriage.

Pray like this:

- Confess sex outside marriage as sin.
- Ask for forgiveness for the wrong relationships you have had. Name as many of the sins as you can for what they are, so that your prayers are concrete and not vague. Name the persons involved if possible.
- Ask the Lord to cut the spiritual and soul ties to each person with whom you have become one.
- Ask the Lord to remove the memory of the old experiences, and to lift their influence from your subconscious.
- Renounce and receive deliverance from the spirit of lust, sexual fantasies and everything that is impure. These might affect you in such areas as pornography, perversion and bondage to masturbation. Later we will discuss how to be set free from specific areas, and how to keep your deliverance.

- Pray for healing of the natural emotions, so that you can function the way God created you to function. In other words, return to complete wholeness. This requires a healing miracle, but He is a God of miracles!

Biblical examples of restoration:

- King David sinned with Bathsheba but humbled himself, confessed his sin and was restored (Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 12:13).
- The Samaritan woman at the well was restored, and many in the town came to believe because of her testimony after Jesus had exposed her sin: "The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband" (John 4:7-30).
- The Pharisees brought an adulterous woman to Jesus, who was to be stoned according to the law, and Jesus said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. . . . Then neither do I condemn you", Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:3-11).
- Rahab the harlot in Jericho saved the spies from Israel and she and her whole family were spared because of the red cord hanging from her window. She became one of Jesus' ancestors (Joshua 2:1-21; Matthew 1:5).
- Mary Magdalene was delivered from seven demons and was one of the women who brought to the disciples the good news that Jesus was risen from the dead (Luke 8:2; John 20:17-18).

 *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body."* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Chapter 20

Shame, guilt and self-hatred

On a number of occasions a certain Lutheran church has run a course called "Restoration of the Personality". Together with a team, I have had the privilege of teaching on salvation, forgiveness and reconciliation, and helping individuals to leave shame and guilt behind. Once, a man in his thirties came forward for prayer; he identified with several parts of the "root system" and was tormented by guilt and shame. He related that some months previously he was visiting St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and had cried out in desperation, "God, I want to be saved!".

On a second occasion, while visiting another cathedral in Europe, he had prayed the same desperate prayer. When he was invited to this course he thought, "This is my chance". He had come armed with handkerchiefs because he knew that he would cry. He accepted Jesus as his Saviour, confessed his sin, and then the dam burst. Freed from his entire burden of shame and guilt, he became a new creature in Christ. Weeping his way through forgiveness, the old passed away, for the new had come!

This happened six years ago. The man is still walking in faith and active in the church. There are so many like him who long to lay down their "burdens of sin", and at the cross it is gloriously possible!

Every human in every society has a built in resistance to admitting personal problems and failures, because of such things as our pride, fear of rejection, or shame. There are some nations in Africa and Asia where the culture itself discourages sharing problems with others so as not to "lose face". When speaking in such nations, I have noticed people are surprised when I have openly shared the difficult things I have gone through personally, but those with similar experiences have responded and come forward for prayer, to confess sin and forgive themselves as well as others. James 5:16 tells us to "confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed". As a Christian it is important to find someone in spiritual leadership with whom you can be transparent and talk openly.

In times of self-examination and openness many will admit to being plagued by shame, guilt and condemnation. These factors become the main reasons for escapism, self-destruction, self-punishment and a general feeling of not deserving anything good, which are all expressed in a variety of ways. To find true change the roots of these symptoms must be dealt with. Think again about the illustration of the tree.

Symptoms or expressions of shame, guilt and self-hatred:

- Abuses: drugs, alcohol, pills, sex, food, compulsive buying, TV, video, computer and "workaholism"
- Kleptomania
- Self-destruction – damaging one's own body
- "Social" destruction – unhygienic body and unkempt clothing
- Obsessions – fixations such as abnormal cleanliness (fear of germs)
- Self-deprivation – depriving oneself of anything good, new or pleasant, preferring to give to someone else who "deserves it more"
- Lack of boundaries – difficulty in setting boundaries and in saying no, and therefore easily taken advantage of by others
- Religious zeal – trying to work off shame through religious activity; legalism
- Destructiveness in relationships – having a hard, judgmental and provoking attitude toward others
- Demand to perform – high demands on oneself and others

Problem

Shame, guilt and self-hatred lead to escapism, self-destruction, self-punishment and a feeling of not deserving anything good.

Roots or causes:

- Personal failures at work, in education, marriage, etc. – see chapters 7, 8 and 13.
- Sexual impurity – see chapter 19.
- Abuse: physical, psychological, sexual or spiritual – see chapter 15.
- Inherited generational weaknesses – see chapter 9.
- False or real guilt over another's illness, accident or death – see chapters 7, 12 and 13.
- Misplaced guilt coming from someone who cannot accept responsi-

bility for his or her own failure – see below.

- False guilt because of parents' divorce – see below.
- As a child being valued for achievement instead of one's uniqueness – see chapters 8, 9 and 10.
- Paralysis of the soul: various areas of the soul's functions stunted in their growth and not developed to normal levels – see chapter 16.
- Own and others' wrong responses to one's handicaps, such as ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, learning disabilities, etc. – see chapter 16.

Blame-shifting

In the Bible there is an example of one person being blamed by another who chose not to accept responsibility for his or her failure. Adam blamed Eve in the Garden of Eden for calling him to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve in turn blamed the snake. Since then, throughout the ages, people have tended to blame someone else for their own mistakes and sins.

If you are or have been around a person who does not accept responsibility for mistakes but has blamed you, you need to be set free from that blame. Forgive the person in question and renounce any false guilt. There will be unhealthy soul ties to that person which need also to be broken. If you yourself blame others around you for your mistakes, you must deal with this sin! You are hurting others. Ask God to forgive you and then ask Him to help you to take responsibility for your own actions.

It is also very common that children take on blame for their parents' divorce. Of course it is not the children's fault, but a sense of guilt plagues them. This is an area that needs more of our attention, as many come from broken homes today.

Many of these roots often manifest symptoms which express deep need and which require the miracle-working power of God. Whether in ministry or in seeking help, it is important to know the key that will release that miracle power. To confess your sin and forgive yourself and others paves the way for healing and deliverance.

Inherited hatred for one's own body

A beautiful young woman who was in a position of spiritual leadership struggled with a desire to damage her body. She hated her body. In

talking to her it was clear that she had not been molested. She knew her mother had also suffered from a strong self-hatred, but she too had no experience of molestation or any other possible abuse. However, one more generation back a daughter had been a victim of incest by her father. This had continued to affect the following generations of women with a curse of self-hatred, until it was revealed and cut off by the power of Jesus.

First experiences of drug abuse, etc.

People who have been addicted to drugs and tell of their first experience have a common thread in their story. They all seem to experience that they crossed a boundary, or that they entered "virgin soil". Drug addicts refer to the "virgin fix", which is the first time that someone shoots up. The "kick" that they get may be difficult to explain in words, but in some way it feels like a very positive experience.

The delight of the "first time" naturally has psychological explanations, but there is also a spiritual connection. The enemy of our souls constantly wants to bind and trap his victims, envelop them in darkness and blind them. To reach his goal, he lavishly offers extra sensations to get his victims to the place where he wants them.

The positive experience obtained from one act of negative behaviour etches itself into the memory. For the rest of their lives many chase after the feeling from that first fantastic "rush". But they are never satisfied, as that first-time experience will never happen again. To be free from this chasing, restless emptiness or seeking satisfaction, the first-time experience must be dealt with so that it loses its charm and drawing power. It is very important to get to the root and to renounce the experience so that a person can go on with life in contentment.

Nine times out of ten, these experiences mentioned have been stored within the person as something very personal, a private area, like a deep secret. If you identify with any of these feelings, it is important to find someone whom you trust in order to get the help you need to express honestly your experience and the specific situation. The enemy wants you to keep it within yourself throughout your life, but Jesus wants to wash you clean from the inside and to set you free. It is possible to break this power in Jesus' mighty name!

For some people, the chasing and feeling of dissatisfaction remain, even after accepting Jesus. If this is the case with you, you may not have reached the root cause because you are not aware of it, but Jesus knows you inside out. Nothing is hidden from Him and you can calmly allow Him to shine His light within you and reveal the root. You are in safe hands!

Here are some further testimonies in this area from which you can draw strength and encourage your faith in God to be completely delivered yourself.

Trapped in amphetamines and crime

A twelve-year-old boy started using drugs, and when he was barely 13 he took his first shot of amphetamines. The enormous rush took hold of his entire being, both body and soul. For the next 25 years his life revolved around drug abuse.

At the age of 15, he came into contact with much older drug addicts, and became the "mascot" of the gang. They stole cars and burgled places. The first time that this young boy participated in a stealing spree, the sensation he felt became a powerful attraction. It felt like a drug "kick" to be able to steal something without being caught! What he stole was not as important as the feeling of being able to get away with doing it, and that is what hooked him.

Life became an endless chase after the feelings he had had at his first shoot-up. He always wanted to experience the first time again, but he never could. The only one who could set him free from this terrible sickness of not getting enough was Jesus. Today he is completely free and lives a life of contentment without drugs and crime.

Positive emotions from attempted suicide

A woman relates how, when she was 15 years old, she tried to commit suicide by overdosing on nerve pills. The attempted suicide was not successful, as her mother managed to get her to vomit out the medicine before it had had time to affect her.

The moment after she had decided to take her life was an experience of conflicting emotions, both positive and negative. With the realisation that she would be free from all the pain and problems of life, she had been filled with an enormous sense of peace. All the worry and anxiety

within her left and she suddenly felt very calm and peaceful. It was as if a strong light had filled her and everything seemed light. It was not a hallucination, as the tablets had not had time to affect her.

First and foremost, this had been a powerful spiritual experience, a manifestation of evil which came disguised as an "angel of light". Although she was not yet a Christian, the girl suspected something was not right. The complete peace made her suspicious and she realised that something was terribly wrong. Suddenly she was no longer convinced that she wanted to die.

During the difficult years that followed, when sometimes suicide seemed like a simple solution, she would remember those feelings and they actually deterred her. Today she is no longer drawn to suicide, as she has dealt with this experience in the power of Jesus. Thankfully the enemy of our souls is not always successful in his tricks – sometimes he is exposed!

More aspects of first-time experiences

Such emotional rushes can also be experienced in other areas, for example, a first-time sexual perversion, criminal act, or act of violence or murder. It is as if a forbidden door is opened and, once open, there are no inhibitions left in that area. A convicted murderer was once asked how he could continue murdering and he replied that it was only the first time that was difficult. "Once you've broken the barrier, it becomes much easier", he said. God has set a boundary for moral transgressions within man, but once we have crossed that line, there are no more barriers.

The fear of God, sorrow over sin and prayer for the restoration of the conscience are vital. If you feel shame, guilt and self-hatred for things you have done, read chapters 6 and 7 again and then deal with the roots, preferably with a counsellor. The sin needs to be brought into the light to lose its power.

Eating disorders

Eating disorders are multiplying rapidly. A national newspaper in Sweden reported that in one city the number of people seeking medical help for such disorders had increased at least twelve-fold in just a few

years. Briefly, I will try to summarise the main features of this rather broad problem referred to as "eating disorders". Anorexia and bulimia are, respectively, self-starvation and bingeing followed by induced vomiting. Often anorexia turns into bulimia, but not always. To society, an anorexic is visibly ill, pale and thin with dull eyes. Usually it is young girls who are affected, but more recently boys have been affected also, exercising hard and dieting to lose weight in an unhealthy way. The age range of those with disturbed eating habits has also grown to include older women down to girls as young as nine. It is not a modern phenomenon as many believe, but has its roots in the 1700's when the concept of the ideal human figure was formed. It was thought that the woman should outwardly display her fragility and need for protection.

Bulimics are different from anorexics in that they are able to absorb some nutrition – enough to look as if they are reasonably healthy, and society remains ignorant of their bondage to an eating disorder. It is harder to help bulimics who often are of normal weight. Today this problem is mainly found among grown women and is more common than anorexia, but being more difficult to identify, it remains more hidden.

If you find yourself caught in an eating disorder, you have for some reason, perhaps subconsciously, chosen to deny yourself the right to eat. The need to lose weight, or at least not to gain weight, is met by inducing vomiting. This in turn causes anxiety and eventually suicidal thoughts. Life becomes a vicious cycle of ups and downs, a preoccupation with food, with eating or not eating.

Often there are roots of rejection which have opened the door to feelings of hatred and bitterness toward one or more people around you. An unhealthy need to control and an enormous pressure to achieve can also be part of the picture. Some are delivered immediately when such emotions or bondages are dealt with in prayer. For most, though, the mind also needs to be renewed so that incorrect thought patterns and behaviours which have been established, sometimes for a very long time, will lose their grip.

There are many different reasons for a person to react to a trauma or situation by choosing, even unconsciously, self-starvation. But somewhere, a poor self-image and self-hatred have been built into the soul. (See various roots in the tree.) Today, a "normal" family background includes divorced parents, difficult family problems and high stress fac-

tors in connection with tense family interactions. Incest and/or other types of sexual abuse may also be factors. Often present is the demand to be a high achiever, or the responsibility for the care of younger siblings, or parents' involvement in substance abuse. Another factor can be high expectations of walking in the parents' footsteps in education or other skills – expectations which cannot be met or lived up to.

Renewing the mind cured a bulimic

A happy woman told me how in a sovereign way the Holy Spirit had fed her with the healing Word of God. Completely supernaturally she had received the revelation that that could cure her of bulimia and anorexia. Following is her testimony with all the typical ingredients:

"I had a very bad self-image based on many different factors. Among them was my father, who had left my mother when I was five years old. Also around that time, my mother was operated on for cancer, and she tried to commit suicide a number of times, attempts which also had their causes. She thought she was going to die at any time during the seasons of autumn and spring, when depression would hit her. I was actively and consciously raised to look after myself in everything. I became my mother's mother and lived under constant threat of losing her.

"In general, there was nothing that others could see which would attribute to a bad self-image, as I was considered both sweet and intelligent. When I was 12 years old I was diagnosed with a disease in my knee, which disabled me from participating in gymnastics at school. As I did not move about as much as before, but still had a child's good appetite, I became quite plump. Had my self-confidence been greater, comments about my weight gain would not have caused frenetic dieting from the age of 13. At one stage I did not eat a thing for a whole week and drank very little. The result was physical collapse.

"Psychologists, counsellors, doctors, teachers and dieticians did what they could. Deep breathing exercises, water gymnastics, walks in the forest and astronaut food (nutritious powder) helped very little. After one month in the hospital my weight had risen from 41 to 49 kilos on my 1.65 m. frame and my menstruation returned, but that was all. I was sent home to my mother who comforted herself with wine and beer. My soul screamed with such anxiety that it hurt my insides, and in one go I swallowed all the tablets I had received from the psychologist.

"In this state I eventually accepted Jesus. I had then been seeking in psychology, other religions, the occult, witchcraft and vegetarianism. Bingeing was expensive and so I stole food. I also thought that any invitation from the opposite sex was real love, which it was not. I did anything to be loved. I knew of no professing Christians who could help me, but I found a teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a small leaflet. It stated that we receive what we ask for, so I simply received the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit led me in a miraculous way through the book of Romans and taught me the truths of righteousness. This gave me the right self-image, to believe in myself just as God sees me. The prophet Isaiah's words became a great well of comfort and joy to me. The Psalms put words to everything that was inside me. The Bible was living! Later when I went to Bible school, I could testify to how wonderfully and accurately the Holy Spirit had made the Word living to me, how bit by bit my mind had been changed and I had been healed in my soul. My body, which had suffered from the lack of nutrition and the vomiting, causing severe tooth decay, He healed too!

"I had many years of struggle with myself, my attitudes, relationships and learned behaviours, which needed to change. It was no easy miracle happening overnight. The miracle came, but not before I had laid down my own ways and turned to God – unreservedly.

"My experience is that Jesus can always provide me with everything I need! His Word and His presence are for healing and deliverance. In Deuteronomy 30:11-14 it says, "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it? ... No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it."

"Today I am completely free from thoughts of calories, pills and any fixation on food, weight or my body. I have no unhealthy need of affirmation from others and I am not afraid of "sticking my neck out" and maybe attracting someone's disapproval. It is absolutely one of life's joys to be able to sit and eat good food with friends, to lie down on the couch on a Sunday afternoon with my stomach full of good food (and dessert), and not to have any feelings of guilt. I have a restored relation-

ship with my father, and my mother went home to be with the Lord some time ago."

Jesus can reach you with healing and deliverance!

Jesus – the way to freedom from anorexia and bulimia

Another woman shares her testimony. She writes:

"I was approximately 11 years old when I started developing eating disorders, first anorexia and then bulimia. I lost 14 kilos in two months. It became a problem at the dinner table with all the nagging, as I ate almost nothing. In order to avoid the nagging, I started eating normally, only to induce vomiting later in the bathroom.

"I swam every day after school, took long walks and never allowed myself to be still for a long period. My body suffered and was functioning at minimum levels. My heart beat slowly, and blood counts and other test results were a catastrophe. I was always tired and cold and lost my hair. At last I was admitted to hospital and met a psychologist regularly. My anxiety was terrible. My whole life became chaotic for many long years. Drug abuse and eating disorders flowed together. I was treated according to various methods, but nothing could reduce my anxiety and pain. I then started looking at various religions, witchcraft, and so forth.

"Then one day I was saved! Seeing a counsellor over a period of time then helped me. Jesus had set me free, but I needed help from people who could point me to Jesus. I also needed to learn to trust people, to start liking my body and myself. If I had not received help from Jesus through the counsellors at this time, I would soon have been back to food and drug abuse. Over a long period I slowly but surely grew to depend on Jesus, to be able to stand and walk because of my own relationship with Him.

"Today I am strong and have found other ways of dealing with opposition than starvation, bingeing, vomiting and drugs. I dare to become angry, laugh and cry. I am not focused on my body or my weight any more. My anxiety is gone! I dare to admit my needs before God. Sometimes I still need people to help me focus on Jesus if things become a bit foggy. I have learned that we need both God and people, but the only One who can bring complete freedom and healing is Jesus Christ. For Him there are no hopeless cases!"

A Bible verse which will give hope and faith to you who are struggling with eating disorders is Psalm 107:18-20: "They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave." This is exactly what these testimonies have confirmed!

Healing after many years of abuse

In a Bible school in Sweden I met an American couple with an amazing story of restoration. The wife shares her story below.

"I spent most of my childhood living in fear and rejection. The first touch of love I received was from my grandmother whom I first met when she was already in her late 70's. One day while visiting us, she took me aside and said, "Susan, God loves you very much and He has a special call on your life. You are very special to Him." I didn't know who this God was, but I will never forget that visit or that she prayed for me.

"My sisters were ten and seven years older than I was. My parents worked and socialised a lot so I was raised by the older of my sisters, who resented such a responsibility. Both parents abused me physically and verbally, and my father abused me sexually, and also threatened to kill me. I believed it must somehow be my fault and I felt dirty, shameful and very afraid. I was called terrible names, told I would never amount to anything and that I should never have been born.

"One day, longing for affection from my mother, I hugged her and said, "Mummy, I love you". "Stop that!" she cried, and burned my hand with her cigarette. So I was still very young when I learned to shut off my feelings and avoid contact with my parents. If I wasn't seen, I wasn't abused.

"Almost every night my Dad would come to my bedroom, but I know now that God was watching over me even then. He gave me the ability to hear my father's feet touch the carpet in his room across the hall and I would get up and hide outside. I grew to hate my father so much that I could have killed him. Praise God that He has saved me from the murder in my heart!

"I was so full of pain that eventually I couldn't live with it any longer and I finally cried out to God. Shortly after that I was looking in a Bible

and the red lettering caught my attention. I started to read the passages in red. God drew me to that Bible and spoke to me through it. I told Him how much I wanted a daddy to love me and protect me. I experienced many long nights on His lap as He held me, stroked my hair and told me how special I was to Him. I had called out to Him and He was there for me.

"Not long after that I ran away. I had discovered that my sisters had also been abused, but when we told our mother she replied, "Well then, leave." I was 16 and I was bitter. If my sisters had said something earlier it could have been different for me. I stayed with my aunt and uncle for a while and tried going back to school but finally dropped out. I then met my husband and we married three months later.

"My husband had also been abused as a child and was kicked out of his home when he was 15. Though our first two years of marriage were very difficult we kept together. We decided if ever we had children we would make sure they were loved and that we would be there for them. After five years we had our first son, Jody. What a joy he was, and yes, he was loved to the best of our ability.

"When Jody was three, my husband was helping to construct a friend's house when our friend's children brought our son to the door. He had eaten a highly poisonous plant and was holding his throat and crying. We rushed Jody to the emergency room where he was placed on a monitor, but soon we were informed that there was no antidote and they had never dealt with this before. His heart rate was down to 40 beats a minute. We were told that at 39 it would stop. I cried out to God, "Please save him!". I clearly heard God answer that Jody was His child, and He wanted us to raise him in His ways or He would take our son home. My husband arrived and our friends, who were Christians, started calling people to pray.

"Five minutes after they finished calling, Jody was jumping up and down in his intensive care bed, completely healed. The doctor couldn't explain it. We committed our lives to God and with thankfulness in our hearts we endeavoured to raise our son in God's ways.

"Some years later, after our third child, Josh, was born, I was standing by his crib one night, watching him. My husband woke up and assured me, "He'll be alright". It wasn't the first time I had been up in the night to watch over the kids. Because of my upbringing, I was ruled by fear that

someone would hurt them. However, eventually I told God that I surrendered everything to Him, even my kids. He then told me that if I was willing to surrender everything He wanted me to forgive my Dad. I couldn't believe that God would require that, but He told me that bitterness only destroys the person that carries it. So after a period of time I did call my Dad and told him that I had become a Christian and that one of the things God wanted me to do was to forgive him, which I did. He began weeping, saying, "Honey, I'm so sorry." I also called my sisters, shared with them how I felt, what God had done in my life and that I wanted to say that I forgave them.

"Today we have four beautiful, grown children; two are married, and three are in full-time missions. Praise the Lord for His forgiveness, redemption and healing power."

 *"Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame." Psalm 34:5*

Chapter 21

Empty the dustbin

Many years ago, Sweden's first known environmental catastrophe hit the news. A mother of young children noted the many miscarriages and allergies in the area and the number of dead fish in the community's river. It also smelled bad, but that could be blamed on the large chemical factory. The factory employees were scared of losing their jobs, and so it took some time before the truth was revealed.

Ten years earlier, the chemical plant had buried a number of drums containing toxic waste and these had slowly started rusting and leaking. The poison spread underground, causing sickness and death in various ways. The catastrophe was very real. Even now, after 29 years of sanitation projects, problems still emerge. No country wants to take care of the drums of waste and they are still circulating the seas.

Take the lid off!

When you are young, active and full of life, the tempo is high and it is easy to push out of sight what we do not want to think about. The lid is put on; we try and forget our failures and mistakes, and life continues as if nothing has happened. And of course, as Christians everything is now under the blood! When you are gloriously saved, you should not start digging into the past, some say. That is true, but problems that have not been brought into the light and forgiven then get stored in the subconscious. Simply put, I would like to suggest that the crises we face in our 40's and 50's are a result of our life's dustbins being full – full of rubbish that we have tried to forget: unresolved incidents, injustices, failures and unconfessed sin.

During life's most active days you can manage to keep the lid on, but after 40 years the bin overflows, the lid slips off and the rubbish stinks. Many then try various ways of dealing with the problem, such as self-realisation, a change of environment, or perhaps a change of spouse. But the real solution is completely different: Empty the dustbin! Allow

the Holy Spirit to clean out and wash layer by layer, to the very bottom.

I have also had this experience with my full dustbin. That is why I can agree with Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 1:4 about the Lord "...who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God".

Empty the rubbish and keep the bin clean; stop sweeping things under the carpet and making excuses. Live daily in the light through repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with yourself and others in your circle of contacts. It is the only lasting solution and a good remedy for a healthy body.

I would like to point out that not all sickness is connected to bitterness and sin, and we certainly do not have all the answers concerning sickness and healing. He who thinks he does is like a teenager who is a "know-it-all". The more experience you gain, the more humble you become as you confess that you do not have all the answers.

How do you solve a crisis in your life?

You men who suffer from mid-life crisis: Empty your dustbin instead of changing wives, borrowing someone else's or running after younger women.

You ladies who are full of condemnation, disappointment, grief and aches and pains everywhere: Empty your dustbin instead of trying to find another physician to give you another medication to make everything feel better.

Young people, empty the dustbin and keep it clean. Then you will be able successfully to navigate life's crisis stages with full strength and victory, and to set right priorities because you have learnt what is important in life.

We may have devoted ourselves to Christian service in the Kingdom of God, and to ministry under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the driving force that can keep things functioning well for many years is the Holy Spirit's anointing. But if we have not kept the dustbin clean, sooner or later it will start to smell. There are preachers who were radically saved from a life filled with the world's pleasures, with powerful testimonies and ministries appreciated by many. There was nothing wrong with their salvation, their spirit or the anointing, but then came the

crisis years and the past rubbish that had not been dealt with made itself known. These preachers ended up in sin and their whole world collapsed. Even teachers of God's Word need to empty their dustbins regularly to stay fresh throughout life. Jim Bakker is one of those humbled men, who now testifies in his autobiography, "I was Wrong", that there is restoration for those who have fallen.

What is your driving force?

Early in life you should seek to understand your true value and who you are, instead of seeking your value in what you do. Many unemployed, chronically ill people and pensioners find life meaningless when they have no work to go to any longer.

If rejection is the driving force of everything we do, then we continually need to prove our abilities and our accomplishments so that we will be as acceptable as others. In the spiritual life it works completely the other way around. However much we strive, we do not become any more righteous. As Christians, everything rests on our accepting God's unconditional love and grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no-one can boast".

Ministering throughout your life

Many of the newly saved people we meet have been prayed into the Kingdom. God answers prayer and has chosen to work through His Spirit, so that when we intercede for unsaved people, the Holy Spirit works in their will and circumstances. Sometimes it can take many years and the intercessor might even die before his prayers are answered, but the answer does come.

There is a special anointing that rests on the older generation to pray for the upcoming generation. When your most physically active days are over, the Lord calls you to a ministry of intercession which is very significant. Your highest reward may be revealed on Judgement Day as coming from the time in your life when you served the Lord in quietness and prayer during many sleepless nights. Can you imagine anyone resisting such a ministry? But we do! Sadly, for many people, advanced

age means a time of regret, continually going over the sins of their youth and the failures of life. Make sure you keep the dustbin empty and clean so that you can fulfil God's call on your life in old age.

Some elderly people who have not emptied the dustbin are no longer able to hold the lid on, their inhibitions are gone and what is inside overflows. An outwardly religious life now becomes full of curses and swearing. The person is saved, yet the soul is now responding to what was under the lid all the time. This of course can be very tiresome and painful for the relatives.

Empty the dustbin and keep it clean, so you are free to glorify God throughout your life.

How do you empty the rubbish?

What you have been reading might sound frightening and you may start wondering what your life really is like. Please do not become depressed or start "navel gazing" and digging into the past! Submit yourself to the work of the Holy Spirit, for He is the Expert, the Helper, and the One who knows you inside out. He is the One who knows what is in your subconscious and the only One who knows what you can handle and when. Those who have made jam know that the higher the temperature the more scum floats to the top, which then needs to be skimmed off. The Holy Spirit knows exactly how high to raise the temperature with each of us – and when.

Be quick to deal with whatever God puts His finger on in your life. Do not make other people your dustbin by dumping it all on them, but take the rubbish to the cross of Jesus. Receive His forgiveness, forgive yourself and others, and do not allow legalism and fear to rob you of your freedom in Christ.

The words of King David's prayer in Psalm 139:23-24 can be very helpful: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

You can also use his confession of sin in Psalm 51:1-12: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is

always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

Verse 17 can summarise the prayer: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Rubbish disposal promotes good health

First Corinthians 6:19 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own..."

Erik Bernspång writes in his Bible commentaries about the temple cleansing: "Jesus started his ministry by cleansing the temple, and finished His ministry by cleansing it. What grace that He didn't destroy it. He does not tolerate impurity, but He knows what needs to be done to get it clean."

In 2 Corinthians 7:10 it says, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death". In a Bible dictionary we find the following definitions of salvation:

- *Sozo* = save, heal, cure, preserve.
- *Jesu'a* = deliverance, salvation, health, well-being.
- *Soteria* = salvation, well-being, health. "The purpose of the work of salvation through Jesus Christ is that the whole man should be restored, his spirit, soul and body redeemed from the curse of sin."

I want to conclude this chapter with a Bible verse which is the key to keeping the soul clean from sin, legalism, fear and failure. John 14:15: "If you love me, you will obey what I command". Read this verse a

number of times. Can you see what it says? As a fruit of your love for Him, you will keep His commandments. The most important thing is to keep your love for Jesus burning. Your life will then become a fruit of your love relationship with Him.

 *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24*

Chapter 22

The enemy is defeated

"Where there are twenty demons, there are also a hundred angels. If it were not so, we would long since have gone under." (Martin Luther)

What the Bible says

Colossians 2:15: "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Ephesians 1:17-19: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength . . ."

Romans 8:37-39: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Luke 10:19: "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."

Ephesians 2:4-6: "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus . . ."

Ephesians 6:10-18: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

A fleshly struggle against the powers of darkness, which have already been disarmed, is merely shadowboxing, because their accusations are only a shadow! Compare this to Colossians 2:13-17.

Testimonies of victory

When as a young woman I arrived in New York to work with Teen Challenge, I heard David Wilkerson tell of how he had been encircled by four would-be thieves on a city street. He was obviously in the minority, but remembered the words in 1 John 4:4, which reads, "... the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world". He was so encouraged by those words that he shouted out loud, "Hallelujah!" at which the young men took off running. A wonderful illustration of God's victory.

I was one of a group of Bible school students in the States who went to a nursing home one day to lead a devotional time. An elderly woman in a wheelchair came in swearing loudly and telling us to go to a certain hot place. What should we do? My mind went to the same verse quoted above, and so we started singing a chorus of those very words, "Greater is He that is within me ...". Immediately the woman calmed down and remained quiet for the rest of the time we were there. The staff told us later that she always behaved badly during the devotional time, but that day Jesus had the victory!

Who is our enemy?

Now, we need to understand that the worst enemy in our lives is not the devil, but rather our own flesh. The devil cannot force us to do anything; neither can he pull us into something we do not want to do. On the other hand, he studies us carefully and knows exactly which areas in our lives and our families' lives are not completely committed to the Lord and nailed to the cross. He knows each family's weakness and can attack through those areas. I would like to point out the danger of compromise. There is a lot of truth in the saying, "Give the devil an inch and he'll take a mile".

An Indian pastor used a very good illustration to explain the inner struggle we have between the old, fleshly nature and the new spiritual man. It went something like this. Think of having two dogs inside you – the one is good and the other bad. They are fighting to beat each other. Which dog wins, then? The one who gets the most food!

If you feed on worldly things, the carnal nature will have the upper hand. Occasionally I have seen a soap opera on TV which has all the ingredients of the world's ways. Have you also seen programmes like that? You can compare them to Galatians 5:19-21 and discover that they include "sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage". Many films, TV programmes and magazines contain these things. The bad dog becomes very fat and strong from such food. Some of the worst material is on the Internet, where sadly the most visited sites are about perverted sex, pornography and the occult.

The good dog grows stronger from spiritual food, God's Word and such things as described in Philippians 4:8, "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy ...". The more you feed the good dog, the more fruit of the Spirit is evident in your life. Galatians 5:22-23a reads, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control". Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God ...". Read more about this in Romans chapters 6-8.

Visions

A brother in our church who had, over a number of years, struggled with an attraction to certain TV programmes, sensed the Lord telling him to read Isaiah 33:14-17. He realised that if his mind was occupied with visions from movies portraying violence and evil, it would be much more difficult to receive visions, revelations and dreams from the Lord.

The passage says, "He ... who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil – this is the man who will dwell on the heights... . Your eyes will see the king in his beauty ... view a land that stretches afar".

How can we change our desires?

Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart". Many times we have seen how people start seeking the Lord, and after some time lose their desire for their old, sinful ways. Instead they have new desires, to know God and win other people for His Kingdom.

Many years ago we worked with a Christian student organisation and had handed out information to all the various student hostels. A young woman from South East Asia, who was studying medicine, called and made an appointment to meet at a café for a chat. She had been the leader of the communist youth organisation in her country's capital, and she really seemed to have a mind of her own. Now she wanted to know all there was to know about the Christian faith. She participated in some Bible studies and soon gave her life to the Lord.

When we met her the following Sunday, she commented that she had been at a party the night before. She used to drink a lot of alcohol at parties and really enjoyed it, but that night she had found she did not like it at all and vowed, "Never again!".

When she accepted Jesus, no one gave this woman a list of do's and don'ts, but she discovered that the Lord had changed her desires! The more you delight in the Lord, the more you will see your desires change. Philippians 2:13 says, "... it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose".

From where do temptations come?

In James 1:14-15 we read, "...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death". Jesus says in Mark 7:20-23, "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean'. For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'".

Everything that you take in through your five senses is stored in your memory. You may think that you are so strong (pride!) that you can handle hearing and seeing all sorts of things. But it is wrong to think that nothing will affect you! Sooner or later what you have seen or heard raises its head as temptation.

This is not always a matter of conscious, open sin through your own choice; it is often more deceptive than that. You might not have planned or intended what has affected your mind, but it has been stored away in the subconscious anyway, and at some point it will make itself known and cause problems for you.

A Christian came from another country to Sweden to complete some studies. He was invited to the movies to be introduced to the Swedish culture. Soon, however, he realised that he was watching a pornographic film, so he got up and walked out. Ten years later, as a married pastor, the scenes from the film he had seen created problems in his marriage. He sought help through prayer and was set free. Make no mistake about it: it is important what we see!

In chapter 25 we look at God's way out of temptation, and at powerful weapons like the blood of Jesus, the name of Jesus, the Word and praise and worship.

The poor country pastor was livid when he confronted his wife with the receipt for a \$250 dress she had bought. "How could you do this?" he exclaimed. "I don't know," she wailed, "I was standing in the store looking at the dress on sale. Then I found myself trying it on. It was as if the devil was whispering to me, 'Wow, you look great in that dress. You

should buy it.'" "Well," the pastor persisted, "You know how to deal with him! Just tell him, 'Get behind me, Satan'." "I did," replied his wife, "but then he said, 'It looks great from back here, too'."

Who is blamed if you fall?

There is a deceptive attitude in many, which is to blame their sin on the devil and his demons. They thus try to avoid taking responsibility for their own sin, and want the counsellors to deliver them from demons. If this does not work, or if the deliverance is not lasting, they do not see that the fault lies within themselves, but think that it is the counsellor's fault. That is self-deception! If you make sure that the enemy's right to torment you is removed, it is easy to get free. Only you know the attitude you are holding in the depths of your heart toward your own burdens and weaknesses.

A pastor told the story of a young man who had been a Christian for a few years. On the night he was saved, he had been delivered from everything in his old lifestyle except for smoking. He continued to smoke two packets of cigarettes per day. At every opportunity he went forward for prayer to be set free, yet without results.

One day he took an unsaved friend to a meeting, and his friend was saved and immediately delivered from his smoking. The man got angry with God and asked, "Why don't you deliver me?" While sitting in his chair smoking he heard a clear voice answer, "Because you still enjoy it!" From that moment the man stopped smoking for good.

You can try to put the responsibility on the pastor, evangelist or the counsellor, but nobody will be able to "pray you free" until you repent from your sins and bondages. Your own choice is what is most important in this situation. Not even God does something which is against your will. Hebrews 12:1 says, "...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles..."

No catalogue of sins!

It might seem as if I have presented a catalogue of sins by naming so many of them here. That is not the intention, but hold on to what was said in chapter 6 about this. For some people, God puts His finger on

eating too many sweets or drinking too much coffee, which can harm the body. Each of us is responsible for the revelation we have received concerning our own life. A teacher once said, "You don't go to hell for smoking, it just smells as if you've been there!".

Focus on Jesus and not on demons

If you pay too much attention to demons, you will be drawing these beings to yourself, both to disrupt your life and to give you a lot to do, because they love attention. If your task is to serve others through counselling, it is important not to focus on demons. The enemy will soon start sending people your way to rob you of time and energy. The person ministering sets the standard and has the authority to allow or stop manifestations.

When we lift up Jesus, focus on Him and point to Him, people around will be changed. In John 12:32 Jesus says, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself". This refers to the cross, but is also a deep spiritual truth for our personal lives and in all Christian work.

It is also important to know that you have an intercessor, as we see in Luke 22:31-32: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Also in Hebrews 4:15-16 it says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need". Hebrews 7:25: "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

 *"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

Chapter 23

How to be free

A well-known preacher uses the following illustration when teaching on demons and deliverance. Imagine a ruin of a demolished house. In it are many crows. It is easy to scare the crows away by waving a broom around. They fly off in a hurry, but they come back almost as quickly. Then you wave the broom around again, and so on, and so on. It can be similar when dealing with demons. You may pray, command demons to leave, see manifestations every time and continue like that all your life until you wear yourself out. It is not very effective! What brings lasting results is to rebuild the house. Then the crows cannot come in.

When you build a house there are many things you need to think about: water, sewerage, electricity, heating and air-conditioning, door locks and many other requirements. This all seems obvious to us in the physical world. In the same way you need to check off the foundational things in your spiritual life to be able to live in freedom. It is a healthy Christian practice in order to have Jesus, not demons, in the centre.

How to gain and retain your freedom

1. Confess sin and repent unreservedly.

Name the sin by the right name, without excuses or blaming extenuating circumstances. Do not hide certain sins you love doing or things that you think are too terrible to tell or confess. First John 1:7 says, "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." You will never be free in an area where you will not confess sin and repent!

2. Build your house with God's Word.

You need a foundation of God's Word in your life to retain your freedom. The enemy wants you to say what he says about you, but he is out to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). He has nothing good to say about you and your situation. That is why you need to build up your house with God's Word – who you are and what you have in Christ.

God's Word on the inside is like a receptor, which makes it easier to retain what God has given you. For me, as well as others who have ministered in the area of deliverance from drug abuse and the occult, this has been an expensive lesson. You can wear yourself out helping people to be set free, but it will not be of any real help until the person realises the importance of being grounded and built up in the Word.

Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you". Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Romans 10:17: "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." In Luke 4 we read how Jesus used the Word ("It is written ...") to meet the devil's temptations. Jeremiah 23:29: "Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" Proverbs 1:23: "If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you." Psalm 107:20: "He sent forth his word and healed them. . . ." John 15:7: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." The portions of the Word of God that have taken root in you can help you get back on track when you have gone astray.

3. Beware of disappointment and bitterness.

If you do that, the enemy will have no right to torment you. Here you need to ask the Holy Spirit over and over again to examine and cleanse your life; otherwise the deliverance does not last. Hebrews 12:15 says, "See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many". If you skip the first point, you will soon be disappointed in God, intercessors and other Christians who do not measure up to your expectations. I want to remind you again of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. We who have had all our sins forgiven need to be merciful and forgive, or we will be delivered to the "tormentors". We have all experienced the symptoms of disappointment: self-pity, headaches, stomach-ache, etc.. The tormentors get into action. You can either allow them, or stop them. The choice is yours!

4. Humble yourself before God, resist the devil and he will flee from you!

James 4:6b-7 says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you". When you humble yourself before God and consciously and purposely resist the enemy, he has to flee! You need to set the boundaries yourself, however, as to what you allow the enemy to do to you, as no one else can do it for you!

To retain your freedom you yourself need to resist. The weapons are the name of Jesus, His blood, the Word, praise and worship and your prayer language (tongues). We look into this in chapter 25. Mark chapter 16 gives us a mission commandment and in verse 16-17 we read: "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." You as a believer have authority in Jesus' name to stop the enemy — first and foremost in your own life and in your own sphere of influence.

5. Live in freedom and leave old habits behind.

If you release a dog that has been chained up for a long time, it takes a while for it to realise it is free. Although it has been released, it still moves within the same area where it was before. If the door to a bird-cage is opened, it takes a while before the bird flies out. These situations illustrate how we too can get caught up in our own little world of habits. Step out into your freedom!

6. Think about what you say.

Words have creative power and it is therefore important for you to think about what you say. In fact, it is so important that we have devoted the next chapter to this subject.

7. Build up the house with healthy habits.

Body, soul and spirit are connected. It is difficult to feel good in your soul and spirit if you do not look after your body and live on coffee and

pastries, chips, Coca Cola, sweets, or whatever "junk food" you prefer. To watch TV and videos all night and sleep during the day does not contribute to good health either. If you do not exercise and breathe fresh air, then your general sense of wellbeing will also be lacking. Be a good steward of the body that God has given you by developing healthy habits. A number of years ago I spent a time of fasting for my ministry. This is a summary of what I felt the Lord said to me during that time: "Be faithful in the little and look after your body so that you will last a long time." I want to pass that on to you.

It is also a necessity to discipline your thoughts and be careful what you see and hear. Proverbs 4:23-27: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil."

8. Let the house be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The enemy's capacity to destroy our lives is great, but God's power is greater! You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who gives you strength to be an overcomer. During the hectic time of music tours in my youth I ended up in a meeting in a Pentecostal church, a denomination which at that time was not very popular amongst the Lutherans. Praise the Lord that many of these boundaries have now been removed! At the end of the meeting a general invitation was given for prayer, and people came forward and knelt at the altar. This was new to me, but I prayed, "Lord, you must do something new in my spiritual life, or I can't carry on touring like this. Please, do what you like!" They prayed for me but I did not experience anything special. One thing I did know, being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues was not for me and I believed that it was certainly not from God either!

When I awoke the next morning, I knew that something had happened. I was just bubbling with joy on the inside and I had such a desire to read the Word and memorise Scripture. That joy carried on bubbling inside and I began to have all sorts of ideas for evangelism which I had not thought of before. I started distributing Christian music and literature in the prisons, reformatories and hospital libraries throughout the

country. After about six months I said to God, "I'm so tired of my paltry words saying, 'I love You', 'Thank You, Jesus', 'I praise You'. You must give me other ways of expressing myself in prayer, praise and worship, and love to You!". It was then that I received a prayer language, which caused my prayer life to explode. There was no doubt from where it came, it was a heavenly language. With hindsight I saw that God had already placed that gift inside me that night at the Pentecostal meeting when I had completely surrendered myself to Him, but I had been too blocked in my mind to let it out. Since then I have also heard and spoken earthly foreign languages, which have been used to deliver messages directly from God to a person in need.

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray when our words are not sufficient. Romans 8:26 says, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express". When you are saved, the Holy Spirit moves into your spirit and gives you spiritual life. Then you receive everything He has – not only a quarter or a half. When you completely surrender to Him, He fills the whole of you. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is a gift, just like salvation, that you receive by faith. It has nothing to do with deserving it. Luke 11:13 says, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!". Neither is it a matter of being filled just once, sufficient for the rest of your life, but it is a daily surrender, an ongoing relationship with God and infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Read the book of Acts, which tells of the Holy Spirit and how He works in a supernatural way. Peter, who had denied Jesus, received power to preach on the first day of Pentecost and saw 3000 people saved. Here you see the reality of the Greek word for power, *dynamos*, from which the words "dynamite" and "dynamo" (light generator) come. The same power is available for you and me today. The Holy Spirit gives us power and boldness. He equips us for service and gives us strength to go on. In Acts 1:8 Jesus says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...".

We also receive strength for our soul. Ephesians 3:16: "I pray that ... he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being

... ." We receive strength to live the Christian life. Paul says in Romans 7:19: "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." Verse 24 says, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?". Romans chapter eight is the answer to the question: life in the Spirit. Read the whole chapter.

We are convicted of sin, righteousness and judgement. John 16:8 says, "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement. . . ". We receive God's characteristics: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control and kindness. Galatians 5:22-23 calls these the fruit of the Spirit.

We receive physical strength. Romans 8:11: "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

We receive guidance. John 16:13: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth."

We receive knowledge. John 14:26: "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

We receive wisdom. Luke 21:15: "For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict."

We receive supernatural gifts for supernatural service. First Corinthians 12:7-10 says: "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues."

In First Corinthians chapters 12, 13 and 14 you can read more about what we have in and through the Holy Spirit. When you have cleaned out the rubbish in your life, it is important to let the Holy Spirit fill the "house". This kind of commitment needs to take place on a daily basis.

9. Stop focusing on yourself and serve others.

If you only think about yourself, then you will not feel so well. Isaiah

58:6-11 has some very powerful promises for those who reach out to others. "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed"

If you "spend yourself on the hungry" (as one translation puts it), it means that even if you have only the necessities yourself and yet you give to the hungry, there are blessings in store for you. You might see yourself in this way in different areas of your life, materially, spiritually or emotionally. Give of what you have to others. Think about the widow with the two mites, about whom Jesus said that, because she gave the little she had, she gave more than those who gave from their abundance. This is God's measuring rod.

Read the wonderful promises God gives to those who give of themselves, even in their need. It is life changing! There is no medicine or therapy that can accomplish what God promises. To focus on others and to serve them is not the whole solution, but a very important part. I do not know of any other collection of promises for my personal daily life more wonderful than this. "Then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." (Verses 10b-11)

We see a good example in Job's life in Job 42:10, when he had lost everything. "After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before."

10. The fellowship of believers

Make sure that you belong to a good local church. It gives you a spiritual shepherd and fellowship. It is both a protection and a storehouse where you receive spiritual food. To live like a spiritual orphan without a home, or like a Christian hobo, who only travels from one lovely meeting to the next conference, brings little stability to a Christian's life. An important part of growing to spiritual maturity is to learn to accept responsibility and to receive correction. That is why you need to submit to a pastor.

Reasons not to wash

If we took the same excuses that people use for not going to church and apply them to other important areas of life we would realise how inconsistent we can be in our logic. For example:

Reasons not to wash:

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who make soap are only after your money.
3. I wash on special occasions like Christmas and Easter.
4. People who wash are hypocrites — they think they are cleaner than everyone else.
5. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
6. I used to wash, but it got boring so I stopped.
7. None of my friends wash.
8. The bathroom is never warm enough in the winter or cool enough in the summer.
9. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
10. I don't have the time.

11. Good daily hygiene

I am sure that you consider it important to wash, brush your teeth and have clean clothes. When someone who does not practise good hygiene is in your presence, you might feel like making some comment. It is just as important to have good, daily spiritual hygiene. It makes a

difference. Here are some pointers to follow:

Thanksgiving. Our pastor's wife has for her whole adult life started the day with Psalm 23. Before she gets out of bed, she thanks her way through each verse. Others have done the same with Psalm 91. To start the day with thanksgiving is a good idea!

God's armour and the protection of the blood of Jesus. Thank Him for His armour as in Ephesians 6:11, and ask for His blood protection for you, your family and possessions. Read more in chapter 25.

Daily Bible reading. Following a Bible reading plan is good. Philippians 4:4-13 gives good advice for living and to feel great. Verse 4a: "Rejoice in the Lord always", for "... the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Verse 5: "Let your gentleness be evident to all." Verses 6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Take all your worries to the Lord in this order. Call on Him, because He will answer you according to Psalm 50:15. Prayer is talking to God about the situation, pouring out your heart, petitioning or calling on Him for help. Thanksgiving is to thank Him for His help, even before you have seen the answer to your prayer. This is good mental hygiene, which surpasses understanding and keeps your heart and thoughts on Christ!

Think about things that are good! Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." It is difficult to fill your mind with rubbish from TV and at the same time to have good, clean thoughts.

Develop contentment and trust in God's help in all circumstances. See Philippians 4:11-13: "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Verse 19 also promises: "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

12. Tithing – the ultimate act of devotion

God desires to bless you. Tithing is not a requirement in order to be saved, but it is a wonderful opportunity for Him to release blessing on

both you and your church. Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the flood-gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

In the beginning of Pastor Yonggi Cho's church in Korea, which today has 750,000 members, they were very poor. A bin for rice was placed at the church entrance, and people brought small paper bags of rice and emptied them into the bin. This was their way of tithing. On the way out of church, people who needed food could take some rice home. It is obvious today that God blessed their giving! There are conditions — not to His love, but to His blessings and promises. Ask God for revelation about giving. In certain areas it is a key to freedom.

A tithe is ten percent off the top of our gross income. The way a believer acknowledges God's favour is immediately to return the tithe of his gross income to God before he spends or gives any other portion. Tithing is man's first outward form of worship and devotion to the living God. When we tithe, we are not tipping God. The tithe belongs to God! He does not need it, He deserves it. God can do without your tithe, but we Christians cannot afford to forfeit His blessings.

When you give your tithe and offering in the right spirit, when you look at it just as you look at paying your bills, when you pray over it and place it in the storehouse (church), you have just unlocked the flood-gates of heaven. God will return your tithe to you as much as one hundredfold. Tithing is a better investment than the money market! Read the rest of Malachi chapter three and see, too, what God says about withholding the tithe. We do not want to rob the Lord of what is rightfully His, but rather to give with a cheerful heart. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver".

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

Chapter 24

Think about what you say

A pastor noticed that one of his baptism candidates stuck out his tongue when he was baptised. "Why did you do that?" he asked afterward. The newly baptised man replied, "My tongue is my worst problem and I thought it really needed to be washed thoroughly."

The story fits well in the context of this chapter, for the biggest offences we commit are surely with our tongue. Psalm 34:12-13 says, "Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies".

In the book of Proverbs we find good advice for a healthy lifestyle, and much of that advice revolves around our tongue. "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Prov. 18:21). "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life..." (Prov. 10:11a). "Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit — you choose" (Prov. 18:21, *The Message*).

Words create!

When God created heaven and earth, it happened through words. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light". God has chosen to create through words, and that is also how He made us. Much of what happens in our life is caused by the way we speak, both good and bad. Let your mouth be a spring of life, for yourself and for others.

The speech centre dominates

Many years ago I heard Pastor Yonggi Cho from Korea speak on this subject. He told about a good friend of his that was a brain surgeon. The surgeon had explained that it is believed that the speech centre dominates all the other centres in the brain. If, for example, the mouth says you will soon have a cold, the brain sends signals to the whole body, which lowers the body's immunity in such a way that it welcomes the infection.

I am sure we can verify certain phenomena about symptoms of illness.

With a slight headache, stomach-ache, some sniffles, sneezes or irritation in the throat, we start telling others how we are feeling. Immediately we start feeling worse, in fact, nearly ready to go to bed.

Through our speech we can either break down or build up the defences. Through positive speech, things feel lighter. If we speak out God's Word over our health, we gain more strength; we can even experience healing. Isaiah 53:5 says, "...and by his wounds we are healed." Exodus 15:26 says, "...for I am the LORD, who heals you." Psalm 107:20: "He sent forth his word and healed them...." Obviously our speech needs to work together with a good lifestyle, correct nutrition and vitamins.

Positive affirmation

With child-raising we know how important it is to encourage and affirm the child, to highlight progress and things that are good. Yet it is so easy to point out and mention the things that are wrong. A child's character and self-confidence is deeply affected by positive or negative reinforcement.

Remember that words create. Speak positively and encourage yourself and others. Make it a game to see if you can find something good to say in every situation. An older lady who was known for never saying anything bad about anyone was asked a question: "You can't say anything good about the devil, can you?" She replied, "You can say what you like, but at least he is persistent."

"You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar," says an old proverb. You will see greater change in the negative behaviour of a child by choosing a positive attitude than by judging, criticising and nagging. There is a teaching technique known as "sandwiching". Encourage and affirm, then bring in the negative comment or correction necessary and finish off with encouragement. Your words create!

One day, a little girl was watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white standing out in contrast to her brunette hair. She asked inquisitively, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mum?"

Her mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong

and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white."

The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then asked, "Mummy, how come all of grandma's hairs are white?"

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mummy say," the mother answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

Speak to your soul!

King David spoke to his soul and encouraged himself to praise the Lord, thank Him and think about all the good that He had done, as seen in Psalm 103:2-5. The soul does not do this automatically, because it would naturally like to think about the problems and the things with which it is afflicted. You need to steer the soul in the right direction.

In Ecclesiastes 3:18-20 we have a very good description of the soul's unreliability. After having accused God of all his problems, the author says, "So I say, my splendour is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD. I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me". No wonder he was downcast if that was all he thought about all the time! But he reconsidered, and continued by saying in verses 21-26: "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him. The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

Psalm 42:11 says, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God".

We, too, need to speak to our soul, to encourage ourselves to thank and praise God and to think about His goodness. Keep a journal and write down all the good the Lord does or says, Bible verses which

become alive to you, and so on. You can then bring out the journal when things are difficult and thank God for what He has done! King David said in Psalm 103:2, "Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...".

Security and protection

In Psalm 91 we see another example of right speech having to do with protection. If we speak out a lot of negative things in fear of troubles, accidents, burglaries, attacks and so forth, we send out invitations to trouble. Soon it will happen just as we have believed!

Psalm 91 has a title, "God our protector". Verses 1-2 say: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." These verses contain several promises of protection in various types of danger. Many soldiers over the years have taken hold of this passage when they have gone to war, and relatives at home have held on to these promises. My son completed two stints as a military policeman for 16 months in former Yugoslavia. The last period ended only a week before the war broke out in March 1999. Both he and the family were glad that he did not need to remain there, and so thankful for God's protection during those times. It is good to rely on God for His protection in all situations. A good piece of advice is to thank your way through Psalm 91 every morning. It creates security!

The storm in your soul is stilled

When thoughts and emotions are in uproar, we need to speak the words of Jesus to our soul, which He spoke to the sea: "Quiet! Be still!" We will see the same result: "Then the wind died down and it was completely calm" (Mark 4:39).

Resist the enemy and he will flee!

By the authority that we have as believers, we can also boldly resist the enemy, with the condition that we first submit ourselves to God. James 4:6b-7 tells us, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you".

After you have confessed any sin, you can boldly say, "In Jesus' name

I command all self-pity to leave me". You can name whatever else might be tormenting you. Then start to praise and thank God. When Jesus was tempted in the desert, He answered the devil with a Scripture verse: "It is written...". See Luke 4:4-11 and follow Jesus' example.

Speak to sickness and mountains of problems

We see another example of speaking forth change in Acts 3. "Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk" (verses 3-8).

Mark 11:22-24 says, ""Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours"."

John Osteen, a well-known pastor in the States, coined the expression, "Don't tell God how big your problems are, but tell your problems how big your God is!".

Lifestyle advice

Some more advice for a good lifestyle comes from Proverbs. Chapter 13:3: "He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." Chapter 12:17-18: "A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies. Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Chapter 14:23: "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty." And lastly in Chapter 18:21: "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Rights in the spiritual world

There is another spiritual dimension to speech. What we speak goes out as signals of authority or challenge. When we speak out good over ourselves and those over whom we have authority, i.e. our families, angels respond in our favour. The negative things we speak out become a challenge on which the enemy has authority to act in our lives. A Biblical example of this is in Luke 7:1-10, which tells of a gentile officer's

servant who was healed. We will look further at this below.

"It's so simple to be wise. Just think of something stupid to say and then don't say it." — Sam Levenson

Negative statements

We humans do not often understand the power in the words we speak over ourselves. We have looked at how much good words can create, but let us look again at how we create through words like, "I'll never be able to do this...", or, "I've always failed at...".

A 48-year-old Christian man in good physical condition started feeling as if he did not have long left to live. He felt as if death was coming ever closer to him and did not understand why. He prayed but nothing helped. He said to God, "I have a family with small children and I don't want to die now!" God then asked him, "What have you said in your life?" He could not remember anything specific, but God reminded him how in his twenties as an unbeliever he had often said that he did not want to live one day past 50 years of age. Immediately the man cried out, "I renounce what I said in Jesus' name, and I will live out my days in full, preferably to age 120!" In one moment his dark thoughts disappeared, as well as his anxiety over getting old.

We also need to be aware of other people's statements about us. This same man related how, as a two-year-old, he had been severely afflicted with polio. For ten days he had been drugged, as it was thought to prevent further damage. Because of the ignorance in those days of how the disease was transmitted, he was placed in the basement of the hospital for many months. This little child forgot his parents, who could not visit him often because of the distance of the hospital from their home.

The doctors warned the family that the little boy would die, and they were advised to acquire a coffin. However, the maternal grandmother was a born-again Christian and asked if she could pray for the boy. The parents were not saved, but the mother agreed. In a little chapel out in the forest, the grandmother started to pray. Later it was discovered that at the same moment, the boy made a turn for the better and he recov-

ered completely. The mother came to salvation through this, and the boy himself later began work as a manual labourer while still at a young age, continuing in physical labour all his life.

In later years a well-meaning relative informed him that after the age of 40 he would again be afflicted by polio, a so-called post-polio syndrome. It would lead to a life in a wheelchair, at best. Now he realised that such information was something from the devil, and decided to deal with the negative statement. It had nothing to do with him as a born-again believer and it would no longer afflict him!

A positive Biblical example of the power of our words is found in Luke 7:1-10, the story of the centurion's servant being healed. Verses 6-10: "[Jesus] was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. . . . But say the word, and my servant will be healed." . . . When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well."

A negative example is found in Genesis 31:32. When Laban accused Jacob that his gods had been stolen, Jacob replied: ""But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods". In chapter 35:16-22 we read that it was not very long afterwards that Rachel died when she gave birth to her son Benjamin.

The use of the tongue

James 3:2-10 gives us a very good description of the use of the tongue: "We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of

evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be."

Various causes of slander and gossip:

Self-assertion. We speak badly about others in order to try to look better ourselves.

Escape. We speak badly about others' faults, instead of dealing with our own problems.

Jealousy. We minimise or make light of others' successes.

Insecurity. To have something to talk about, we speak about the affairs of others and mention all the details.

Contempt for weakness. We express our contempt for others' weaknesses and failures.

Disobedience. If we do not live in obedience to our own calling, it is difficult to live with those who are, and so we look for faults in them.

Projection of self-contempt. When we recognise our own weakness in someone, we despise that person rather than facing our weakness.

Self-destruction. We become hard, critical and judgmental toward other people because of our own self-contempt. This breaks down relationships.

Self-righteousness and legalism. We become merciless to those who do not have the same standards that we believe are right.

Condemnation. We refuse to take responsibility for our own faults, but instead blame others, thus excusing ourselves.

Family weaknesses. We may have grown up with slander and gossip around us.

Self-deceit. In a Christian community with rigid rules, gossip can be considered a "legitimate" sin, as it usually does not result in disciplinary action.

Spirit of this age. One of the signs of the last days is slander and gossip. See 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

If you recognise yourself in any of these points, take it to God and confess it as sin.

A word of warning

Words of warning concerning our speech can be found in 2 Timothy 2:15-17: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene." Untreated, gangrene leads to amputation or death. Different translations of the last sentence use words like "cancer" or "tumour". In other words: Empty and ungodly talk spreads death.

Compare this to Proverbs 18:21! Life or death is in the tongue! Do not allow your tongue to speak death, but rather let it be a fountain of life, as Proverbs 10:11 says. It affects both you and those around you.

"Oh, I'm so happy to see you," the little boy said to his grandmother on his Dad's side. "Now maybe Mum will do the trick she's been promising us!"

The grandmother was curious. "What trick is that?" she asked.

"I heard her tell Daddy," the little boy answered, "that she'd climb the wall if you came to visit."

A car was involved in an accident in a street. As expected, a large crowd gathered. A lawyer, anxious to be the first one there, could not get near the car. Being a clever fellow, he started to shout loudly, "Let me through! Let me through! I'm the son of the victim."

The crowd made way for him. Lying in front of the car was a donkey.

 *"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Proverbs 18:21*

Chapter 25

Jesus – the Deliverer

If you have read this far, you will have understood that Jesus is the way to freedom. In the Old Testament there are powerful verses that show how and where to receive help, and I will refer to some of them in this chapter. Read them, underline them in your Bible, meditate on them in relation to your own situation.

Isaiah 9:6 refers to Jesus: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

We are going to go through these names, one at a time, to see what they mean.

Wonderful (doing wonders)

In the King James Bible, Isaiah 9:6 says, "Wonderful, counsellor..." while the Swedish translation is "wonder, counsellor..."

We can read our Bible without actually seeing what it says. I had lived more than 30 years as a Christian before I discovered God's view on sickness and healing. In Exodus 15:26 it says, "I am the LORD, who heals you". He sent Jesus to pay the price for all sin and sickness.

Isaiah 53:4-5: "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Matthew 8:16-17: "When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases"."

Jesus also came to reveal God's will and His character. "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me", says John 6:35-38. In everything that Jesus said and did, in His responses and attitudes, He wanted to show what God was like.

How Jesus responded to sickness is the direct expression of God's will and character.

Matthew 14:35b-36: "And when the men of that place recognised Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed."

Matthew 4:23-24: "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed, and he healed them."

Then we have the wonderful, timeless words from Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Study these passages in your Bible to help you discover their power for yourself.

There is no doubt as to what the will of God is, but we need to grow in faith, and His servants need to grow in anointing and boldness. There are reports from around the world that this is happening. An evangelist whom I have met a few times says that after a crusade in one of Asia's largest stadiums in Delhi, India, they collected two truckloads of stretchers, crutches and wheelchairs that had lost their owners. What miracle-working power!

A young evangelist with whom we have close contact had just come back from India and said that about 10,000 people, almost all of them Hindu, attended the first meeting of the campaign. He felt led to pray for the blind, but at that point he did not know that this particular town was known for the number of blind people living there. Mighty healing miracles started happening amongst the crowd and those who were healed came forward to the platform. A woman came with her husband, and they reported that they had heard about meetings where you could be healed, so had walked for six hours to get there, the man leading his wife the whole way, as she was completely blind. Now she could see and they were so happy! Many received their sight that night. Fantastic! Soon it will be my turn!

I have personally seen many healings in the ministry, and through the years have experienced many physical healings in my own life and in my

family. The sequel to this book is about health and healing.

Counsellor

Jesus is wonderful in giving counsel. When the Scriptures say that the Lord is our Healer, it doesn't mean that all the doctors, surgeons and nursing staff are not necessary – if anything, just the opposite. Working together is recommended, but God's miraculous resources are so much greater. He can do what a doctor cannot do, as He is the Chief Physician. This is the same with counselling; Jesus is the best.

Psalm 32:8 says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you".

Mighty God

This entire book is about a mighty God who can transform things and for whom nothing is impossible. Think about the young woman who was healed of cancer, who received a new kidney, a new ovary and two children. Miracles!

Think about the baby that died, came back to life and was healed from brain damage. Think about the man who had been sentenced to prison for 42 years but came out after five, was saved and healed. Think about the one sack of rice that was enough to feed 50,000 people for more than seven months in Korea. Think about the fish miracle in Greece where a ton of fish jumped up on the beach and provided food for the people of Youth With A Mission. Think about all the healings which have taken place in the souls of the people whose testimonies we have shared here.

Psalm 46:10: "Be still, and know that I am God...." In Genesis 18:12 we read: "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" This is about the promise given to Sarah and Abraham, the child they were going to receive in their old age when "Sarah's body had dried up".

Jeremiah 32:17: "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."

Everlasting Father

To the next generation which is growing up in an ever more insecure and fatherless society, the need is greater than ever before for a father who is always available. Many Christians' greatest need is to get to know the Father – His unconditional love, grace and mercy. He is "a father to the fatherless..." (Psalm 68:5).

A good friend of mine shared a very significant memory of her father from when she was small. Her mother and siblings were standing in the entrance hall while their father was about to leave them. The little girl had been the apple of her father's eye. Before he walked out the door for good, he bent down and patted her on the head and said, "Good bye, then". It was many years before she saw him again.

When she was in her thirties, she was saved and healed of such painful memories during a time of prayer. She experienced the miracle that God can recreate. While praying through that particular memory, she saw Jesus come into that small entrance hall where the family was standing. Jesus bent down and not only patted her on the head, but picked her up in His arms. At that moment she received a new image of the Father, and all the feelings of disappointment disappeared from her life. The Lord made everything new.

Prince of Peace

In John 14:27a Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you". Philippians 4:6-7 gives a "prescription" for God's peace in different situations: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The morning that the Gulf War broke out in January 1991, my youngest son and I were on an aeroplane in the States on the way home to Sweden. Shortly after take-off we noticed the plane was descending and preparing to land at a small airport close by. As we touched down it was announced that there was a bomb on board and we were to proceed to the nearest exit. No baggage was to be taken and no coats

or other articles.

Immediately I felt great peace and I heard the Lord say, "There is no bomb". We were the last out of the plane and we had put our jackets on. All the others stood there shivering in their shirtsleeves while the plane was searched. The FBI interviewed all the passengers for three to four hours. After careful investigations, it was confirmed that there was no bomb on board.

On the bus leading to the terminal, my six-year-old son knelt on the seat and started singing "Jesus loves me, this I know...".

We had two more flights before landing in Gothenburg, but the Prince of Peace felt tangibly close that special day. He reigned in my emotions and both my son and I remained peaceful in spite of the outbreak of war around us.

As in the day of Midian's defeat

The verse in Isaiah chapter nine that we have been looking at has an interesting context. At the beginning of this chapter, the situation of the people is described before the deliverer came. Let us look at some earlier verses. This same darkness is present today too – maybe also in some area of your life? But the same hope also exists: Jesus.

Verse 1: "Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress [anguish]." Verse 2: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." Verse 4: "For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor."

The words "as in the day of Midian" are usually jumped over during the Christmas period when this passage is read, but in fact the words refer to the coming of Jesus. However, it is a message that applies not only to Christmas, but also to you and me throughout the year. You can look up the whole story concerning the Midianites in Judges 6 and 7, but I will summarise it here.

The children of Israel had been under the power of Midian for seven years. God had allowed this as they "had sinned in the eyes of the Lord" by worshipping idols. The Midianites were related to the Israelites, as Midian was one of Abraham's sons by his concubine Keturah (Genesis

25:1-6). Abraham had tried his own way of bringing to fulfillment God's promises that his descendants would be like the sand. The sons of Hagar and Ketura were sent away without an inheritance to the eastern lands, but with only a few small gifts. The promised son, Isaac, received the whole inheritance. This is where the jealousy and enmity started which today is called the Middle East conflict. What we can learn from the outcome of this story is that, irrespective of whether or not we have created the darkness in which we find ourselves, the way out is the same. Learn from and be encouraged by how the children of Israel came out from under Midian's power.

The situation had become so severe that the Israelites dug holes and caves in the mountains to escape from the Midianites. Time and time again the enemy, like locusts, came in swarms with their cattle, camels and tents, devastated the crops and destroyed the land. Food, cattle and crops, all were destroyed.

Many people can identify with how the Israelites must have felt. Fear and anxiety cause people to live in holes and caves, figuratively speaking. You may feel as if the enemy comes in like a swarm of locusts and everything is stolen from you in life.

In such a desperate situation, the children of Israel called on God for help. God answered by raising up Gideon, one of the most unlikely people, as a human tool, and also a prototype of Jesus, our deliverer. An angel revealed himself to Gideon and said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior". Gideon's reply was not very impressive: ""But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?""

Read more about this in Judges 6:12-16. Gideon then built an altar to the Lord and called it "The Lord is peace", Jehovah Shalom. "*Shalom*", means, "unhurt condition, health, order, peace, security and safety" (Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

More covenant names of God are: "The Lord my Healer", "The Lord my Shepherd", "The Lord my Provider", "The Lord my Banner", "The Lord that is ever present". It gives victory power to proclaim these

names in situations and problems. In distress it is important to remind ourselves of who God is and to express who is our refuge and our help. Build yourself up with who God says He is. He is Jehovah Shalom because He is your peace, serenity, health and security, and He wants to bring you to a place of complete inner well-being.

During the night the Lord spoke to Gideon to remove the people's sin and idol worship. Verse 25: "...Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." Gideon obeyed. After we have turned to God for help, it is important to be obedient to what He says. If He points out sin that we need to deal with, we must confess and repent, and then, forgiven, we can be fearless and walk in freedom.

In verse 34 it says that Gideon was clothed with the Spirit of God's power, and he followed the Lord's instructions (chapter 7:5-7, 16). Together with 300 other men with very unusual weapons, Gideon surrounded the enemy camp. They sounded the trumpets, broke the clay jars that were in their hands covering the torches and shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!". Verse 21 tells us that "While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled".

When we obey the Lord's commands as Gideon did, we can stand still and see how our enemy flees. In Exodus 14:14 it says, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together". The Lord slew the Midianites with unusual weapons. In our spiritual struggle our weapons are also unusual and unique – but powerful.

Second Corinthians 10:3-5: "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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."

Armour and weapons to help us

1. Armour

According to the Lord's instructions we need to put on the armour of God to be able to stand fast, stand upright and be able to defend ourselves; see Ephesians 6:10-18. We need to remind ourselves of this

daily and to make ourselves dependent on this. Pray from Ephesians 6: "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests". Here follow some comments about why we need this armour.

We are in the middle of a spiritual war, and as believers we can see that we are targets for Satan's attacks, as we are no longer on his side. Paul urges us to make use of each piece of the armour that God has provided for us so that we can stand against these attacks and remain faithful through the struggle.

The belt of truth: Satan's weapon is lies, but sometimes they sound like the truth. It is only the believer who owns the truth that can gain victory over the lies of Satan.

The breastplate of righteousness: Satan often tries to get our heart – the place where our emotions, identity and security lie. Righteousness is God's acknowledgement of us – a piece of armour which protects the heart. He is on our side as He loves us and has sent His Son to die for us and make us righteous.

The shoes of the gospel of peace: Satan would like us to think that it is an impossible and meaningless task to spread the good news to all people, a task too difficult for us to accomplish. These "shoes" that God has given us are to motivate and inspire us to continue in the struggle to spread the true peace which we can only find in God – the good news which everybody should hear.

The shield of faith: We experience Satan's attacks as offences, setbacks and temptations. The shield of faith protects us from these fiery darts. With eyes of faith we can learn to live above these circumstances and be sure of the final victory which belongs to us.

The helmet of salvation: Satan wants us to doubt God, Jesus and our salvation. The helmet of salvation protects our minds from doubting what God has done to gain our salvation.

The sword of the Spirit – God's Word: The sword of the Spirit is the

only offensive weapon in the armour. There are times we need to go against Satan offensively. If we are tempted we can rely on the truth of God's Word and use it to defeat the enemy.

2. The blood of Jesus

Our defensive weapon is the blood of Jesus. Revelation 12:10b-11a says, "For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb...". Every demon knows that he is overcome and disarmed by the blood of Jesus. It is important as an overcomer daily to pray for the protection of the blood over yourself, your loved ones, your possessions, your church and the other areas of your life. In this way you protect your territory.

A pastor from one of the eastern European countries told us of a man who contacted them about becoming a Christian. For three generations he and his family had been so-called spiritual advisors to the government. Through occult power they were able to receive masses of information about, and even names of, strangers they met on the street. This man was at an occultic conference in town and discovered that there were certain people on the street whose names and information he could not "receive". He wondered why and started to follow them. All went to the church that he himself consequently contacted. There was a more powerful force there than the one he had. The blood of Jesus protected these committed Christians.

3. The Name of Jesus

Our weapon of attack: the name of Jesus. Mark 16:17: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons...." I will never forget my first experience of the power of the name of Jesus. At a service nearly 35 years ago, another woman and I were alone with a man for whom we were praying in the prayer room. His sister had obtained permission from the mental institution where he was a patient to take him with her to attend our meeting. It was said that it took seven men to pin him down when he became violent. A missionary from Asia who had seen many demonised people had commented that this was one of the strongest possessions he had witnessed. We had earlier ministered to the possessed man's sister, who had been saved

and set free from powers of witchcraft. I knew of the situation, but when he approached me with his fists and I had no place to run to and no one to help, I had no fear. I just heard myself say, "Sit down in the name of Jesus", and the man sat down like an obedient little boy. He became calm, was set free from his torment that day, and could later move back to his parents for longer periods.

Throughout my life I have come across only a few demon-possessed people, and then I have always been thankful for the power in Jesus' name!

A woman was on her way home after an evening prayer meeting and decided to take a short cut through a field. It was late and very dark, when suddenly two young men with long knives jumped out from behind a bush. She immediately knew what this meant, as the violence in the country was statistically high. She would probably be raped and then murdered. However, she confidently told them that they could do what they wished to her body, but her soul belonged to Jesus Christ and that they could not touch. No sooner had she finished, when a bright light shone down from the sky. One man ran away in fear, while the other fell to the ground screaming, "The hand of God is upon me!" over and over again. After a short while, the woman was able to pray with her would-be assailant to receive Jesus Christ as his Saviour, then he accompanied her home to make sure that she arrived safely. On Sundays they were seen going to church together to worship the Lord.

4. The Word of God

When Jesus was tempted by the devil after his forty-day fast in the desert, he responded to the temptation by saying, "It is written..." (Luke 4:1-3). All sin can be divided into three groups, which we find in 1 John 2:16: "...the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does..." Jesus was also tempted in these areas, and He was victorious! He is our example. Revelation 12:11: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..." Jesus did this and so can you and I.

I met a woman in the States who had been delivered from a dangerous situation by using the Word. Over some months she had been having problems with a peeping tom, and one night a man came to her

home wanting to use the telephone. It was pouring with rain, so she did not recognise him as the culprit. The man came into the house and went to the bathroom where he removed all his clothes, came out and ordered her to do the same. Rising up within her she sensed the words from 1 John 4:4 and spoke out, "Greater is he that is within me than he that is in the world". The man put his clothes back on and she asked if she could get him a cup of coffee and tell him about Jesus.

Long ago I heard another story of using the Word as a powerful tool. A woman was very frightened of the dark. After hearing a teaching about the power of God's Word, she learned Psalms 91:4 by heart: "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge...." One night she had to go out and went to the garage to fetch her car. On entering the garage she saw a man standing there waiting to attack her. She was very frightened. She started flapping her arms wildly and shouting, "I am covered by His feathers, I am covered by His feathers!". Now it was his turn to be frightened. A strange woman like that you dare not attack!

5. Praise and worship with thanksgiving

In 2 Chronicles 20, King Jehoshaphat received orders from the Lord to send out worshippers to come against the hosts of the enemy. They were to sing: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever". When they started singing, the Lord helped them overcome the enemy (verse 22). We need to be attentive to the Lord first, and we must not be ignorant of what the enemy wants to do, but when we praise and exalt the name of the Lord, then the heavenly hosts are with us. It does not matter whether the song is musically perfect – some sound good and others sound terrible to us – but our Father loves to hear His children sing. Some sing new songs of victory, others sing hymns from the 1800's with wonderful liturgy. Be watchful that you do not despise different types of praise. Heaven listens to the heart's song of thankfulness and praise. That is why you can praise and worship even if your voice is old and broken, hoarse or completely gone. Your heart's tune is the marching signal to the heavenly hosts to fight for you.

A Christian family found themselves for a few months in a catastrophic situation in their family business. They prayed and asked God for a word, and received Habbakuk 3:17-19: "Though the fig tree does not

bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights."

They took up the challenge to praise God even if it seemed so dark around them. In the mornings they greeted each other with the words, "I will rejoice". Through this word from the Lord they received spiritual, mental and physical strength to go through this time, and God's miracle-working power was released too! There were unexplainable reports of success and it became a time of miracles they will never forget.

With thankfulness and praise you can make it through your circumstances – they release victory power. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

The anointing breaks the yoke

Where Isaiah 9:4 says, "as in the day of Midian's defeat", there is a reference to Isaiah 10:24-27. It is a Messianic prophecy of how the Lord will continue to deliver. It states that as the Lord slew Midian at the rock of Oreb, and as He stretched out his staff over the sea, so He will again rescue from bondage. "In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your neck. . . ." The King James Bible continues, "the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing". It is Jesus and His anointing which break the yoke.

Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor..." (Isaiah 61:1-2). It is Jesus' anointing in which we need to trust. It is this anointing for which you and I are called to be channels. John 8:32: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free". It is the truth which has been revealed to us that sets us free. Pray for revelation and anointing (Eph. 1:17-19).

First Thessalonians 5:23-24: "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it."

I want to close with the words from Philippians 1:6: "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus".

"God will Never..."

*The will of God will never take you
where the grace of God cannot keep you,
where the arms of God cannot support you,
where the riches of God cannot supply your needs,
where the power of God cannot endow you.*

*The will of God will never take you
where the spirit of God cannot work through you,
where the wisdom of God cannot teach you,
where the army of God cannot protect you,
where the hands of God cannot mould you.*

*The will of God will never take you
where the love of God cannot enfold you,
where the mercies of God cannot sustain you,
where the peace of God cannot calm your fears,
where the authority of God cannot overrule for you.*

*The will of God will never take you
where the comfort of God cannot dry your tears,
where the Word of God cannot feed you,
where the miracles of God cannot be done for you,
where the omnipresence of God cannot find you.*

— Author Unknown

 "...and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

Suggestions on how to pray in various situations

Abortion

- Confess before God that the foetus was not just abstract tissue, but an actual child.
- Confess as sin that a life was taken, and ask for forgiveness.
- Commit the child to the Lord, and thank Him that he or she is in heaven. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to little children!
- Thank God for His forgiveness and express forgiveness to yourself for what was done, and for those who were involved in the decision.
- Release the resulting shocks and trauma of the event.
- Break all consequences of the abortion on the children born after it.

1 John 1:9

Adoption

- Break influences from the biological parents' religion.
- Stand in the gap and ask for forgiveness for other sins within the family line, e.g. impurity, rejection and any other known or suspected sins.
- Pray for healing of the soul for the time in the womb.
- Pray for the shocks of separation from the biological parents, any consequent stay at orphanages or foster homes and the departures from these places.
- Pray for a new foundational security.

Born out of wedlock

- Forgive your biological parents.
- Stand in the gap for their sin and impurity.
- Ask God to deliver you from rejection and to heal you from the time in the womb, from conception onward.
- Pray that all God has thought and prepared for you will come to pass.

Ps. 139:14, Zeph. 3:17, Ps. 8:3-6.

Burn-out

- Look after yourself! Because we consist of spirit, soul and body we need to pay attention to all areas. A change of environment, good nutrition, plenty of fresh air and exercise are important to get back into shape. You also rest better with the tiredness that comes from physical exertion than that which comes from tormenting thoughts.
- Pray for God's help and light in the situation. Take responsibility and ask for

forgiveness where you have been wrong, where you have pushed yourself too far, or been careless. Forgive yourself!

- Forgive others for anything wrong in what they have said, or how they have judged you and acted towards you.
- Pray for the shock of the experience that triggered the reaction. Cut off all wrong soul ties to various details, words and even persons involved.
- Pray for healing for the body and soul.
- Take plenty of time to build yourself up in God's Word, praise and worship, prayer and good Christian literature.

Psalm 103

Death wish and suicides in the family

We recommend that you pray with someone who is spiritually mature, trusted and acknowledged as an authority in the church. After asking for the protection of the blood of Jesus over yourself, your family (or others connected to you) and your possessions, you can say something like this:

"I stand in the gap as a representative of my family and ask for forgiveness for _____ (insert name) who has committed suicide. I confess this as sin and ask for forgiveness on behalf of my family and myself for this covenant with death, which made death a friend and a way of escape. I renounce any such covenant for myself and my descendants, in the name of Jesus. Thank You for the eternal covenant I have with You, Jesus, Lord of life! It is You to whom I give myself. Thank You for forgiveness, cleansing, freedom and life! I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."

Haunted house

- Try to gather as many facts about the place as possible. What has taken place further back in time? What kind of people has lived there? Is there a pagan or demonic influence? Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring revelation and light.
- Pray with a group! These assignments should not be taken on alone, but with fellow believers, under the authority of the church. Matthew 16:16-19
- Pray for the protection of the blood of Jesus over yourselves as the intercessors, your families, your church, your possessions, etc.. (See Revelation 12:11.)
- Praise God for His greatness, that He is almighty and that He has won the victory on the cross over the enemy. Spend a good amount of time in praise and worship, with thanksgiving!
- Pray for reconciliation and deliverance. Stand in the gap for what has happened in the place and ask God for forgiveness. In this way the enemy loses his right. No loud prayers are needed to command the powers of darkness to leave.
- Lastly, ask God's presence and peace to fill the house.

Incorrect concept of God

- Forgive parents that they have not been able to portray God's character correctly in every area.
- Ask God to remove your parents' negative character traits from your understanding of God so that you can see His true character correctly.
- Study God's character in the Bible and pray that He will reveal His truth to you.
- Pray also that He will lay down a correct, God-fearing attitude which will become a foundation in your Christian life.

Jam. 1:17, Matt. 7:11, Lam. 3:22-26, Jer. 31:3, Isa. 49:15-16, Ps. 68:5-6, Ps. 103:1-18.

Inherited family weaknesses

- Thank Jesus for His redemption purchased on the cross from all negative and sinful inheritances from your family and relatives.
- Plead the protection of the blood of Jesus over you and your family.
- Confess you own sin in the various areas and ask for forgiveness.
- "Stand in the gap" as a representative for your family and relatives. Confess the sin and ask for forgiveness.
- In the name of Jesus, renounce all consequences, over you and your descendants, of your forefathers' actions. Command any bondage in these areas to be loosed.
- Thank Jesus for freedom and His blessings and grace "to a thousand generations" (Exodus 20:6).
- Ask God for help to live as an overcomer in this area. This weakness now becomes like any other temptation, which can be overcome with the help of the spiritual weapons that God has put at our disposal.

Ex. 20:4-6, 1 Pet. 1:18-19

Occult involvement

All occult involvement needs to be identified as disobedience to God, renounced and confessed as sin. Every form of occult involvement needs to be named, as you remember it, then confess it as sin and ask for forgiveness in Jesus' name. See it as an added blessing to ask for forgiveness for those things which you have not remembered!

It is necessary to renounce all occult involvement in Jesus' name and to command all the powers of darkness and Satan himself to leave you alone. Jesus did this in His own authority (Matt. 16:23) and just as His disciples, you can command Satan to be gone in Jesus' name (Acts 16:18), both from yourself and others.

- Pray with a repentant heart for God's forgiveness. Confess each sin specifically (1 John 1:9) and claim God's forgiveness.

- Renounce each occult involvement in the power of Jesus' name (2 Cor. 4:2).
- Plead the cleansing blood of Jesus over every sin.
- Accept freedom and deliverance by faith. Do not go on feelings or 'signs', but hold on to God's Word and the confirmation and assurance will come. Plead the blood of Christ and proclaim His victory on the cross. Satan knows that he needs to relinquish his prey when he is commanded to do this in Jesus' name. This does not mean that you can always see the results immediately. Firmly proclaim your deliverance in faith, "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Offences

Ignored, slandered, deserted, discriminated, and abused – the list is endless.

- Thank Jesus that He knows and understands you and the circumstances.
- Lay down before Him your right to be disappointed and bitter.
- Confess your disappointment and bitterness towards _____ (insert name) as sin and ask for forgiveness.
- Express your forgiveness towards _____ (insert name) and release the person from guilt.
- Bless the person and continue to bless regularly. It keeps your heart pure and releases the person (John 20:23).
- Your experience may need further prayer in relation to shock experiences.
Col. 3:12-14, Matt. 18:21-35, Matt. 6:12, John 20:23, Mark 11:22-25, Heb. 12:15.

Salvation

"Lord Jesus, I need You.

I have gone my own way and sinned against You.

Thank you that You died and rose again for me.

Forgive me my sins.

I open my heart and receive you as my Lord and Saviour.

Take control of my life, and change me into what you want me to be.

Amen."

Thank God for your salvation, for what Jesus has done for you and the new life He has given you. Thank Him for the good gifts that come to you from the Father, and for all the good that He has in store for you. Contact a Christian church to receive further help and advice on how to grow in faith, and to become part of the Christian community/fellowship.

Rom. 3:23, 6:23, John 1:12, Rom. 10:9-10.

Sex outside marriage

- Confess sex outside marriage as sin.
- Ask for forgiveness for the wrong relationships you have had. Name as many of the sins as you can for what they are, so that your prayers are concrete and

The Way Out

not vague. Name the persons involved if possible.

- Ask the Lord to cut the spiritual and soul ties to each person with whom you have become one.
- Ask the Lord to remove the memory of the old experiences, and to lift their influence from your subconscious.
- Renounce and receive deliverance from the spirit of lust, sexual fantasies and everything that is impure.
- Pray for healing of the natural emotions, so that you can function the way God created you to function. In other words, return to complete wholeness. This requires a healing miracle, but He is a God of miracles!

1 Cor. 6:18-20

Shock experiences

- Submit yourself to the Holy Spirit and His anointing. Use common sense in the various details.
- If there are any areas or situations where reconciliation is necessary, start with that. Deliverance and healing are released through reconciliation.
- Pray that the Lord will cut all ties in the soul to the various details of the incident.
- Pray that the Lord will nullify painful memories of what was seen, heard and felt, from the incident.
- Pray that everything that has been repressed and held back will be released and removed from the subconscious.
- Speak to the shock to be rendered powerless in the name of Jesus.
- Command all consequences to leave: fear, anxiety, phobias, the spirit of death, or whatever else is applicable.
- Pray for healing within the soul, and then thank the Lord in faith for what He has done.

Ps. 107:26-30, 2 Cor. 10:3-5.

Scripture verses for encouragement and help

Here below is a list of Bible verses which you can use to take hold of God's promises. You could copy these pages so that you have the verses on hand daily.

Prayers from the Word

The following verses are in the first person, so you can use them as your own personal prayers.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength...." Ephesians 1:17-19

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God." Philippians 1:9-11

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light." Colossians 1:9-12

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through

faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:16-21

Grace and forgiveness

"Whoever comes to me I will never drive away." John 6:37b

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:16

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isaiah 43:25

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:18b

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:11-12

Who you are and what you have in Christ

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" Romans 8:32

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:13-14

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...." Ephesians 2:6

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in

the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Ephesians 1:3

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

Victory over the enemy

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." Colossians 2:15

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39

"The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."
1 John 4:4b

"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." Luke 10:19

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this,

take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." Ephesians 6:10-18

God's goodness

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no-one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17

"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" Matthew 7:11

"Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." Lamentations 3:22-26

"The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."" Jeremiah 31:3

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me." Isaiah 49:15-16

"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing...." Psalm 68:5-6

"Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psalm 103:1-5

God's care for you

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

"Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." Psalm 55:22

"I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name." Isaiah 45:2-3

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:20

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

Strength for the soul

"For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." 2 Chronicles 16:9

"Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens." Psalm 68:19

"I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint." Jeremiah 31:25

"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31

"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion." Psalm 84:5-7

"...the joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10

"He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Psalm 23:2-3

"Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have

made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." Isaiah 46:4

Do not fear!

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour...." Isaiah 43:2-3

"The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."" Romans 8:15

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ...Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:1, 27

"God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"" Hebrew 13:5b-6

The Lord is your Healer

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:4-5

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." 1 Peter 2:24-25

"When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and

carried our diseases." Matthew 8:16-17

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." Hebrew 13:8

"...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him." Acts 10:38

"Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave." Psalm 107:19-20

"Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up." James 5:14-15a

"But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall." Malachi 4:2

"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones." Proverbs 3:7-8

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