

WASP: 6 Areas of Bondage

Paul declares, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”¹ This is quite the interesting verse. It implies that Christians can be in bondage and need to be set free. Also, having been set free, Christians can find themselves returning to bondage. Which raises the question, “What kind of bondage are we talking about?” We are going to look at six of the most common bondages that Christians are prone to, and how to break them and receive freedom.

Sin

Sin is the most obvious bondage in which Christians can find themselves trapped and it is the one area Christians tend to understand. All that will be added here is to say that there is a difference between being tempted and sinning. Whereas we tend to know that, we don’t always understand it. For example, is every bad thought that pops to mind a sin? Christians often believe all ungodly thoughts are sin, and they confess them. But Jesus had bad thoughts in the wilderness, yet He never once sinned². These thoughts were put in His mind by Satan and are called “temptations”. Christians often lose the battle to keep bad thoughts away by treating them as sins when such thoughts are really temptations. They confess, which is what we do with sin, but not what we do when confronted with temptation. It is no wonder why so many lose the battle.

What is the difference between a sin and a temptation when it comes to impure thoughts? When an ungodly thought first arises, it is a temptation. It is a lure to us to keep thinking more about the thought or worse, put the thought into action. At some point after a wrong idea comes to mind, we realize what we are thinking is not good or holy. At that point, we must make a choice: welcome the thought or resist it. If we resist the thought and successfully rid ourselves of our ungodly thinking, we have not sinned. But if we welcome the thought, either to think further about it or to put it into action, then we are in sin and need to confess.

Once we realize we are being tempted with impure thoughts, what do we do? How do we resist them? The thing *not* to do is to try hard to not think those thoughts. That is a sure way to lose. Paul explains, “...For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.”³ In other words, when we see the right course of action (to rid self of the thoughts), but approach the problem by setting a standard and trying hard to meet it (a “law of my mind”), then sin starts a war within and we are guaranteed to lose.

What is the proper way to deal with temptation? First, we need to realize temptations come from two places: the devil and ourselves. With temptations from the devil, James 4:7 says: “Submit yourselves,

¹ Galatians 5:1

² Matthew 4:11

³ Romans 7: 22-23

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then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Practically speaking, we need to rid ourselves of demonic influence by commanding, “Satan, in Jesus’ name, stop putting these thoughts in my head and to leave me right now.” That is the resisting part. Submitting is explained in Romans 6:13-14 and is also how we overcome temptations which arise from within ourselves.

...present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
Romans 6:13-14

In other words, we turn to God and say: “I know You expect me to _____. I also know there is nothing in me able to live up to that. Would You do whatever You need to do in me so that I live this way?” It is now God’s job to work within us, by His divine power, to produce godliness. We may mistakenly think this will take Him a long time and we will be doing a lot of sinning before He is finished, but nothing could be further from the truth. He can change things within us quite dramatically and quite quickly. Those pesky thoughts can evaporate in the blink of an eye. Of course, submitting to God doesn’t mean saying the words that are given here. It is simply asking God to fight this battle in whatever way you see fit to ask. Sometimes temptations come so hard and so quickly that “Help” is about all you have time for, but it is still submitting to God for the victory.

Bitter Root Judgements and Expectations

When hurt, people are prone to judge the offender out of their hurt. Either out loud or in their heart they put the person down, criticize, or otherwise demonstrate a negative attitude towards him or her. This bitterness can be lodged in hearts, repressed, unknown, and unexpressed. If never dealt with, this bitterness may pass out of consciousness over time, but is more likely to remain buried alive and can spring up at any time. When it raises its head, it brings defilement, not only to us, but to others around us⁴.

Scripture explains the universal principal of reaping and sowing⁵. Jesus specifically addresses its applications in the area of bitter judgements, “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you”⁶. By harboring bitter root judgments, we may find ourselves the target of the same kind of

⁴ Hebrews 12:15

⁵ Galatians 6:7

⁶ Matthew 7:1-2

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bitterness and judgment. Or we may find ourselves doing the very thing for which we judged the other person⁷. **If there is Fruit, then there's a Root!**

Bitterness serves as an open door to the enemy, manifesting in emotional/physical/spiritual problems in our life. It is also possible to take a judgment a step further and form a bitter root expectancy. For example, a wife who judges her father for never being home because of business can create an expectation that the man in her life will never be there for her, and her husband may find himself undeservedly on the receiving end of her bitterness.

What are bitter roots or bitter root judgements?

- Sinful reactions to circumstances that occur in our lives
- Condemning judgements of other people
- The inability or refusal to forgive someone
- The operations of the unchangeable Laws of God, which cause us to reap in kind what we have sown

Bitter Roots are NOT hurtful or terrible things that happen to us, nor are they the sins of those who have wronged us. They are OUR sinful responses to those things that have happened to us, planted deeply within us due to our refusal or inability to forgive.

Why God instructs us not to form judgments: Jesus said, "Do not judge"⁸. There could be no clearer statement on the subject. This does not mean, however, that we ignore another person's sin. The Bible is very clear, we are to address others' sin. We are to confront them with it in the hopes of mending our broken relationship, and we are to help them overcome it, but we are not to put negative judgments on anyone because of their sin.

God is concerned and against His children forming judgments for our own good. In many cases, our negative opinions, which we believe to be true, are not. Our perception is not always truth. However, there are times someone has been rude and ignorant to us or was stupid and careless in what they did. Sometimes they have simply been a burden to everyone around them. What is so wrong with calling it like it is? To understand, we need to go back to Genesis and look again at what originally went wrong with our world.

⁷ Romans 2:1

⁸ Matthew 7:1

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Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

Genesis 1:26

Meanwhile, Satan had been thrown out of heaven and was looking for another place to rule, setting his attention and attack against God's prized creation, man. He tempted Adam and Eve to turn from God to give him their allegiance, and thereby forfeit their rule and dominion over the earth:

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

Genesis 3:4-5

The temptation was not so much to eat forbidden fruit, as it was to "be like God, knowing good and evil" for themselves. And this is what they chose, the knowledge of good and evil, which became the ruling force in the earth, under Satan.

This is called the rule of law. Man makes laws, and everyone lives by them; no one is above the law. We're proud of the rule of law, and it is certainly a better rule than the rule of tyranny or anarchy. However, it is still Satan's idea. And despite our best efforts, we wonder why injustice continues and the law lets us down. The rule of law is the best sinful people can devise. But it falls short of perfect justice. And it does nothing to make people good. In fact, the Bible says that even God's perfect law does not make people good. Just the opposite: "The law was added so that the trespass might increase"⁹.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

Romans 7:7-8

This is a common experience with all of mankind. Someone tells us we can't do something, and it becomes the very thing we desire to do. We may not go ahead and do it, but the truth is, we want to. Proof again that the rule of law is not from God.

⁹ Romans 5:20

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This raises the question, “Why did God give the law?” The law was put in place to lead sinful man to Christ, that we may be justified by faith¹⁰. The law was given so we would know how far we fall short of God’s standard of perfection and come to Jesus to receive grace and mercy and salvation by faith. God’s kingdom is not about law: it’s about grace¹¹. Those who do not realize they are sinners, will never seek a savior.

When we set up standards to which we hold people accountable, and then judge when they are not met, we are operating in the ways of the kingdom of darkness. We are on Satan’s ground. God’s way is for us, when we see people going astray, to deal with that problem in mercy and grace.

And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to *those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Luke 6:31-36

This includes how we deal with ourselves. Some people would never say a negative word about another, but continually put themselves down. They are still living as Satan would want them to live, filled with bitterness and judgment. We are called to love, forgive and bless all who do wrong – including ourselves.

Examples of Bitter Root Judgements:

- I’m a worthless person.
- I can’t do anything right.
- I won’t try because I won’t get it right anyway.
- I’ll never succeed or, if I do, I’ll never be able to carry success through long-term.
- People close to me will control me.
- People close to me will hurt me.
- Family will hurt me.
- People (everyone) will reject me.
- If people get close to me, they will hurt me.
- I can’t need you; you’ll let me down.
- I’ll never get out of debt.
- I’m a burden. I’m baggage.
- I’ll leave you before you leave me.
- I don’t want to be part of this family.
- People cannot hurt me if I shut them out.
- I’ll never forgive my mom/dad for messing up this family.
- Mom/Dad is cold and unaffectionate.
- No one wants to hear what I have to say.
- Intimacy is sex.

¹⁰ Galatians 3:24

¹¹ John 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:8-9

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- I am stupid and can't grasp things.
- I am irresponsible and can't be trusted to do things.
- I can't do things; I am unable to look after myself.
- I need a man/woman to look after me.
- I am not loveable, or no one will love me.
- I don't deserve love.
- Our sex life will not change.
- Authority figures are out to get me.
- Authority figures don't listen.
- Authority figures don't respect people.
- Authority figures expect perfection.
- Authority figures are to be feared.
- I must fight all authority.
- Authorities hurt people; they do not help people.

Examples of Bitter Root Judgements against God:

- God is unpredictable.
- He is punitive.
- He is unforgiving.
- He demands perfection.
- He is hard to please.
- He wants fearful control of me.
- He has no warmth at all.
- He doesn't value me.
- He doesn't find me precious or special.
- His blessings are for everyone else but not for me.
- He doesn't want me.
- God isn't there for me.
- I must suffer to get anything good from God.
- God will only tease me; He will not give me what I want.
- God never gave me anyone to share my hurt with.
- God doesn't hear me when I pray.
- I have to earn God's blessings. I must perform.
- He will not protect me.

Examples of Bitter Root Expectancies:

- Expecting to fail.
- Expecting to be criticized.
- A woman expecting men to abuse her.
- Expecting to be rejected.
- Expecting to be controlled.

Treatment of Bitter Roots:

First, recognize those roots and how they affect our lives and the lives of those around us. Then, choose to repent, from the heart, by determining to stop patterns. Nail judgements and expectations to the cross in prayer. Prayers should be specific, focused, and Spirit-led and they must be prayers of forgiveness:

1. Forgive the offender (see the section on forgiveness). The offender could be another person, yourself or God.
2. Repent of the bitter root judgment (expectancy).

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3. Repent of any other sins (i.e.: anger, selfishness, self-pity, etc.), which caused you to form the judgment/expectancy.
4. Break the ungodly soul tie(s) that links you in bitterness to any third-party offender (see section on soul ties).
5. Tell any spirits that have advantage in your life through the bitter root and the ungodly soul tie to go in Jesus' name.
6. Ask the Lord for the healing of any pain from the original situation. Pray that God would take an axe to the root of the judgment (expectancy) and cancel all reaping and sowing. Pray cleansing for the defilement caused by the bitterness.
7. Ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh filling, especially into the areas which were formerly defiled by bitterness.
8. Continue to walk in freedom. Resist Satan when he tries to whisper you back into bitterness. Jesus has set you free.

Sample Prayer to Break Bitter Root Judgements/Expectancies: If you made a judgment on someone else because of their sin against you, forgive that person and cut soul ties (soul ties are explained below.)

Father, I confess that, because of my hurt, I formed a bitter root judgment of [name judgment]. (If applicable, add: I have also formed a bitter root expectancy of [name expectancy].) I acknowledge this as sin, and I now repent and turn from it. I also acknowledge and confess [name other sins attached to the bitter roots] (i.e.: self-protection, pride, self-image, etc.). I ask You to forgive and cleanse me.

In the name of Jesus, I break this judgment (expectancy) off at the roots. I declare it to be of no force, effect or influence in my life. I ask You to cancel all reaping and to lift off all parties involved, including myself, the defilement from the bitterness I sowed. Jesus, shine Your light into all parts of my old nature that fed this judgment (expectancy), cleanse me from all the unrighteousness and drive off every spirit of the enemy. I ask You to seal off any entry points to Satan that were opened into my life by these bitter roots and to alert me to any future temptations of the enemy to reopen this door. Thank You, Father, for my forgiveness, cleansing and freedom from this sin. In Jesus' name.

Walking in Freedom from Judgements:

It is one thing to break judgments already made. It is another to not make them anymore. We have a natural tendency, when we see sin or mistakes, to judge the people involved. We even do it with our brothers and sisters in Christ. And some of us do it most with ourselves. How do we stop that?

Let's start with the judgments we make about our fellow believers. Paul writes, "But now he [God] has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish

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and free from accusation”¹². Christ’s work on the cross is sufficient to put an end to all accusations. To accuse another is to live contrary to the gospel and to the truth of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. By judging, we live as if Christ’s death did not purchase freedom from accusation.

What about the judgments we put on ourselves? The writer of Hebrews asks, “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”¹³ The blood of Christ alone is sufficient to cleanse our consciences of the guilt of sins committed. But what about perceived guilt as opposed to actual guilt, things like feeling stupid or unworthy or ashamed?

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:19-23

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Colossians 1:21-23

The blood of Jesus cleanses us from a guilty conscience, period. False guilt included. Both passages emphasis hope, available through the good news of Jesus, that God is faithful. And by holding to this hope, we can release all guilt and walk in freedom of bitter judgments and expectancies.

Ungodly Soul Ties

A soul tie is what holds us together in relationships. It is a bit of a misnomer, because relationship bonds can be established on body, soul and/or spirit ties. The marriage relationship gives a clear example, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). With a soul tie, we are bonded emotionally, by sharing common interests, by being like-minded and so on: “... make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in ... purpose” (Philippians 2:2). Finally, we can be bonded spirit to spirit: “After David had

¹² Colossians 1:22, NIV

¹³ Hebrews 9:14

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finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself” (1 Samuel 18:1). Some relationships are soul and spirit ties, like the relationship among Christians. Some encompass all three, like the husband and wife relationship. “Soul tie” is a simplified term used to describe any relationship bond between two people.

Soul ties in the original creation were completely godly. They were designed for the flow of blessing and nurture between people. However, when sin entered the world, things started flowing between people in their relationships: sin, hurt, and other forms of ungodliness. Ever since, relationship bonds have been a mixture of ungodliness and blessing. Where the ungodliness from a relationship results in bondage in one’s life, the ungodly soul tie should be cut in prayer, so the bondage can be broken.

Examples of ungodly soul ties needing to be broken: (this list is not exhaustive)

- forbidden sexual relationships, whether consensual or not
- wrong agreements (i.e.: partners in crime; oaths binding a person to a secret society)
- domination/manipulation/control or any other way of overriding another person’s free will
- relationships characterized by abuse of any kind (i.e.: violence, physical attack)

Breaking ungodly soul ties:

1. Confess any personal sin.
2. Forgive if you were sinned against (see section on forgiveness).
3. Break soul tie and deliver anything demonic which may have come in on it.
4. Ask the Lord for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit.

Sample prayer to break ungodly soul ties:

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I break all ungodly spirit, soul and body ties which have been established between me and [name of other individual involved]. I sever that which is linking supernaturally and ask You, Father God, to remove from me all ungodly influence of [name the other individual] and to bring back to me every part of me which has been wrongfully tied in bondage to [other individual] through the blood of Jesus. I ask you, Father, to place the cross of Jesus between me and [other individual] and to stop the flow of anything ungodly between the two of us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

I now speak directly to every evil spirit that has taken advantage of this ungodly soul tie. You no longer have any rights here, and I order you to leave now without hurting or harming me or any other person, and without going into any other member of my family.

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Inner Vows

An inner vow is a statement of what we will or won't do (i.e.: "I will never trust that person again"; "I will get gold in the Olympics"). An inner vow may sound good, even godly (i.e.: "I will never put my children down in front of others like my mother did to me."). However, the problem with a vow is that we yield that part of our lives to the lordship of the vow rather than the lordship of Christ. It creates a pocket in our lives that God cannot touch because we have placed our given authority and power in a decision of what will or will not be done.

The danger here is that, what Christ does not control is fleshly and always a potential open door to the evil one¹⁴. Additional problems can also be tied to the inner vow. For example, an ungodly soul tie may be created by the vow, as when people vow that they will be or will not be like someone else they have known. Or, the vow may create a false god, as can sometimes be the case with an athlete driven to high success or persons striving to achieve success in their ministry or careers.

Common inner vows:

- I won't let anyone get close enough to hurt me ever again.
- I'll never ____ again.
- I'll never accept myself the way I am.
- I'll never forgive ____ for ____
- I'll never give myself completely to anyone.
- I'll never ask for help.
- I'll never remember.
- I won't feel.
- I'll never trust a man/woman.
- I'll never tell a man/woman anything.
- I'll never be angry.
- I'll never fight/argue.
- I'm not going to grow up.
- I'll never get married.
- I'll never be like my mother/father.
- I'll be perfect; then maybe someone will love me.
- I'll be strong and make it on my own.
- I'll control my own life and be safe.
- I'll never be in the limelight again.
- I'll never trust anyone.
- I'll never let ____ happen again.
- I'll never have a child/boy/girl.
- No one's going to tell me what to do.

Prayer to break inner vows:

Father I confess I have sinned in making the following vows: [acknowledge vows]. I renounce these vows and ask you to forgive me. [Confess any other sins attached to the making of the vows: i.e.: anger, bitterness, etc. Forgive anyone whose hurt toward you may have been at the root of your vows.] In the name of Jesus, I break these vows, I declare them null, void and without influence in my life. By the sword of the Spirit, I cut myself free from their effects. Finally, I ask You Jesus to seal off any entry points to Satan which were opened into my life by these vows. They are forever sealed in the name of Jesus.

¹⁴ James 4:13-16

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Inner vows are very powerful when made during formative years of childhood, as often they are forgotten, but grow to have greater power due to their unconscious and hidden nature. Because of this, they can be difficult to identify. However, bitter fruit appears to remain even after the root has been severed:

- defensive habitual flight mechanisms
- automatic anger
- bitter root expectations
- actions and words that trigger automatic reactions
- anxieties and fears

It is not necessary to remember making those inner vows. If we can recognize the fruit, then by faith we must forgive those who have hurt us, as well as forgive ourselves. We must confess and repent for sinful reactions that led to the making of the vows. We must understand we need perseverance to work through overcoming long practiced habits, structures, and patterns.

Childhood vows with regards to parents:

No parent is perfect. Because they aren't, they sometimes hurt their children, and children, in their reaction, make vows. Though they are made in innocence or ignorance, and are often forgotten over time, the effect stays with a person until that vow is broken. For example, a child whose Dad ridicules her for expressing her thoughts or feelings, may vow in her heart never to speak out freely to another man as long as she lives. Later, she finds herself unable to communicate freely with her husband and sons and wonders why. Sometimes the reasons for childhood vows are less obvious. For example, if we as children, do not receive the love we need, we may make a vow such as "I'm just not going to bother anymore" in order to stop the hurt of trying and never receiving, but then as adults there is difficulty giving and receiving love in other relationships.

People can have difficulty renouncing and breaking childhood vows for two reasons:

They cannot bring themselves to admit that their parents sinned, or in some cases, were quite frankly evil in their behavior (i.e. childhood abuse). They may put a religious spin on this, saying that the Scriptures tell them to honor their father and mother¹⁵.

They can bring themselves to admit that their parents sinned against them or were evil, but they refuse to let them off the hook, feeling that this is the same as saying that their parents' behavior was really nothing serious at all.

Such people need to be lovingly disciplined into a different perspective:

¹⁵ Exodus 20:12

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First, we should never have blinders with regard to sin. Naming our parents' sin has nothing to do with dishonoring them. If we are to be free of the pain that their sin caused, we must forgive them. It is sin that is forgiven, not our vain attempts to rationalize our parents reasoning and actions or to take the blame that rightfully falls to them.

Secondly, forgiving parents' sin is not the same as letting them off the hook. It is the same as letting them off *our* hook. However, they have a more serious hook to then be concerned about – God's, as Paul writes, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."¹⁶

Finally, address expectations for change. To be truly free, we must forgive our parents, release expectation for change, and leave the results to God. We then need to hold ourselves open to God for Him to heal our wounds. This will lead us to have compassion on our parents even though they continue to be unrepentant and unchanged. That kind of healing is often a process and takes some time.

The following prayer allows us to honor a parent not easily honored, and go on to renounce childhood vows concerning them:

Father, thank You for creating my [father/mother] in Your image. With all my heart I forgive [him/her] for not becoming all that you created [him/her] to be. I forgive [him/her] for the following sins [he/she] committed against me [name any list of things the Lord has showed you]. I realize that [he/she] needed healing like the healing I am now receiving from You. I accept my [father/mother] as they are, an unhealed person, in need of grace. Thank you for all you created [him/her] to be. By Your grace, would You reach out to [him/her] and show [him/her] how to become that person. I look to You now for all the things I needed my [father/mother] to give me that [he/she] couldn't give. Heal me of all woundedness and bring me to a place where I can love my [father/mother] with Your love. In Jesus' name.

Summary of how to break vows:

1. Forgive anyone whose sin against you may have caused you to make the vow.
2. Confess your own sinful reaction (i.e. anger, bitterness, etc.).
3. Forgive the person and cut ungodly soul ties.
4. Break the vow.

¹⁶ Romans 12:9

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Curses

A curse is a word spoken which has the potential to bring into a person's life something which is not God's perfect plan and purpose for that person. A curse may originate with God, Satan or man:

- A curse from God is His decision to withdraw His hand of protection or to initiate judgment because of a person's sin.
- Satan attempts to bring as many curses as possible on a person, as it is his driving purpose to oppose the work of God in everyone's life and to "steal and kill and destroy"¹⁷.
- A curse laid by another person takes the form of words spoken with or without the intent to curse. Once released, these words can curse a life in one of two ways: the person hears and believes, allowing the curse to affect his or her life (i.e., the child who is told over and over that he is bad and then grows up to be bad), or the person does not hear them, but demons do and try to enforce them.

Proverbs 26:2 says, "Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, So a curse without cause shall not alight." In other words, just because a curse is leveled at us does not mean it will have an effect on us. This excludes God's curses, as they are always just, and will come to rest on the person to whom they are directed. However, two cautions need to be given lest we become overly confident to the point of not being wise. First, who among us is so confident of our spiritual walk that we are absolutely certain we are not giving the enemy cause to land a curse on us? In this regard, keep in mind Psalm 139:23-24, where the psalmist asks God to search him and ferret out anything wicked of which he might be unaware. Secondly, ongoing verbal attacks from the people around us or from Satan can wear us down and make us more vulnerable to receiving the curse.

How to address curses:

1. Forgive the person who spoke the words. Cut yourself free from the effect of that person's words. If you cursed yourself, confess that as sin.
2. Break any ungodly soul tie(s) (see section on ungodly soul ties).
3. Pray for deliverance from any demons that may have entered on the ungodly soul tie, may have taken advantage of the pronouncement (curse or inner vow), or may have gained a foothold in your life through any of the sin attached to the making of those.
4. Pray for a fresh infilling of the Spirit.

Sample prayer for breaking curses:

¹⁷ John 10:10

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Thank You, Jesus, for dying that I might be forgiven, and for taking on Yourself every curse that could ever come upon me. By an act of my will, I now choose to express the desire of my heart and forgive [person] for saying [state cursing words]. I release [him/her] into the freedom of my forgiveness. [Or I confess that I have cursed myself by saying ____.]

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I break all ungodly spirit, soul and body ties which have been established between me and [person's name]. I sever that which is linking us supernaturally and ask You to remove from me all ungodly influence of [other person]. Bring back to me every part of me which has been wrongfully tied in bondage to [other person] passed through the blood of Jesus. I ask You, Father, to place the cross of Jesus between me and [other person] and to stop the flow of anything ungodly between the two of us.

In the name of Jesus and by the sword of the Spirit, I cut myself free from the effect of the words spoken by [other person], and I declare them null and void, no longer able to influence me. By faith I receive my release, and I thank You for it. I ask You, Father, to search out and expose to the light all the ungodly thinking and behavior which is part of my life because of these cursing words, and to bring healing and wholeness.

I speak directly to every evil spirit that has taken advantage of these words and has sought to enforce them in my life, and to every spirit which has taken advantage of the ungodly soul tie between me and [other person]. I order you to leave now without hurting or harming me or any other person, and without going into any other member of my family. In Jesus' name.

Pronouncements:

A pronouncement is an authoritative statement made by someone who has no ill feeling and no intent to hurt the other person. For example, judges pronounce guilt or innocence based on evidence. Doctors pronounce people incurable or chronic based on a medical diagnosis. Pastors, teachers and parents may also make pronouncements. The problem with pronouncements is in their power to curse a person's life. For example, an "incurable" pronouncement taken in, may not be able to exercise faith in God's healing power. The person pronounced "guilty" may have difficulty receiving Christ's free and full forgiveness.

One example of a very powerful pronouncement was by a medical doctor concerning a woman, who, due to erratic periods, was told she would find it difficult for her to conceive and her only answer was fertility drugs. When she forgave those who spoke these pronouncements, and they were broken, she conceived shortly thereafter. They are dealt with in the same way as a curse of words. Pronouncements need to be forgiven and broken in the name of Jesus.

Ancestral curses:

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Curses and pronouncements can be passed down family lines; physical characteristics like height and hair color, tendencies to develop diseases like cancer or emotional problems like depression, character traits and sometimes even gestures. Ungodliness can come down to us from our ancestors as well. Ever hear the expression: “He’s a chip off the old block?” Sometimes that means “he” has a good trait from his parents such as his father’s good looks or his mother’s intelligence. However, sometimes it refers to ungodly traits: his mother’s anxiety or his father’s treatment towards women. These kinds of ungodly traits are what we call ancestral curses. We break ancestral curses the same way we break any other kind of curse: forgive, cut soul ties, pray against any demonic influence, and ask Holy Spirit to fill that part of the person’s life that knew the effect of the curse.

Sample prayer to break ancestral curses:

Father God, I come before You in the name of Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord. I confess I and my ancestors have sinned and done evil in Your sight. Thank You, Father, for sending Your only Son, Jesus, to die in my place, to pay the penalty for my sins through shedding His blood, and to bear the punishment for the sins and iniquities of my ancestors in His bruised and broken body on the cross. Thank You, Father, that He was wounded that I may be set free.

I choose now to acknowledge and confess the sins of my ancestors, on my mother’s and father’s side, whether natural, adopted or foster, back to the fourth [or another number if the Lord gives an earlier generation] generation and to the tenth generation for sexual sins.

I confess all ungodly thoughts and negative emotions which have had an ill effect on my family line and on me: pride, anger, arrogance, violence, fear, bitterness, resentment, shame, ungodly domination and control, emotional hardness, hatred of women and despising of men.

I confess the operation of rejection in my family line in whatever form, especially that which is now affecting me and my family.

I confess all mental illness in my family line: anxiety, depression, phobias, obsessions, schizophrenia, and manic depression.

I confess addiction in my family line to alcohol, drugs, gambling, caffeine, nicotine, food and all other false comfort for pain.

I confess sexual sin in my family line, known and unknown: fornication, adultery, incest, bestiality, obsessions, perversions, pornography, masturbation, homosexuality and lesbianism, and I renounce the pleasure from these sins.

I confess the destruction of marriage through divorce.

I confess all untimely death in my family: death in the womb, early death, sudden and traumatic death, suicide, murder, fear of death, and death from war.

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I confess unresolved grief from death.

I confess the effects of war on my family.

I confess lying and deception in my family line.

I confess the effects of guilt, feelings of guilt and false guilt in my family line.

I confess the feelings of needing to be punished or blamed.

I confess all religious restrictions, whether from a Christian denomination or church, from different false religions, or from occult involvement.

I confess all involvement in and tampering with occult power and the hidden things of darkness. I recognize that supernatural knowledge and power not coming from God are sinful.

I confess pronouncements, inner vows, false judgments and curses in my family line.

I confess where the fathers in my family line have not taught the children the ways of God.

I confess ungodly attitudes and belief systems in my cultural background.

I confess all hereditary illnesses and weaknesses in my family line.

Father God, I come before You in the name of Jesus, confessing these sins in my family line. I now lay the punishment and inherited weakness on Jesus, on His bruised and broken body, and I release myself from their effect. Thank You, Lord, that I can cast my burdens on You. I receive my freedom. I now, by an act of my will, unreservedly forgive my ancestors for their sins and release my ancestors into the freedom of my forgiveness. No longer will I blame them for how I am. I confess and take accountability for my own sins in these areas. I repent and turn from them and ask You to forgive and to cleanse me with the blood of Jesus. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for cleansing me. Please renew me and lead me in Your way.

Declaration

I now renounce all sins of my ancestors. I have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and placed into the Kingdom of God's dear Son¹⁸ and I cancel every work of the enemy that has come against me as a result of the sin of my ancestors. I have been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ¹⁹, and I sit with Him in heavenly places²⁰. I have authority over the enemy and I renounce all assignments that he has

¹⁸ Colossians 1:13

¹⁹ Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1

²⁰ Ephesians 2:6

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directed against me and my ministry. I cancel every curse that has been put on me. Christ became a curse for me when He died for my sins on the cross so that I can be free²¹.

I reject every way in which Satan may try to claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased me with His own blood²². I reject all other blood sacrifices whereby Satan may try to claim ownership of me. I belong only to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the only seal of ownership on me is the seal of the Holy Spirit²³. By the authority that I have in Jesus Christ of Nazareth who came in the flesh²⁴, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ that is in or around me to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father, to do His will from this day forward.

Additional sample prayer:

Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of my sins and the breaking of every curse of the law from my life, so that I might receive all the fullness of my inheritance in Christ Jesus by the promise of the Spirit²⁵.

In the name of Jesus, the name that has all authority in heaven and earth and beneath the earth, I renounce every sinful word I have spoken or thought about You, God, and I ask You to forgive me. In Jesus' name, I break all curses on me due to blasphemy or cursing You, by me, my family, or prior generations. I forgive all offense that I have taken at what You did or did not do. You are Sovereign. You alone are Most High God. I love You and do not resist You²⁶.

In Jesus' precious name, I renounce every sinful thought or word against any servant of God. I ask Your forgiveness where I have lifted my hands against Your anointed ones. I forgive all Your servants for giving offense, and I pray Your blessings on every servant of Yours that I have ever known. In Jesus' name, I claim the release of the cross for every curse passed down to me by my family or prior generations for cursing Your servants. The blood of Jesus is between them and me²⁷.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, I renounce and ask You to forgive me for every sinful word or thought about Israel, Jerusalem, or any Jewish person. I break all curses on me brought on by myself, my family, or prior generations. I forgive all Jewish people who have offended me, and I pray for the peace of Jerusalem²⁸.

In the powerful name of Jesus, I renounce and ask You to forgive me for every sinful word I have spoken or thought about my parents and any act that I committed that dishonored my father or mother. I forgive my father and mother for every offense against me. I apply the redemption and release of the

²¹ Galatians 3:13

²² Acts 20:28

²³ Ephesians 1:13

²⁴ John 1:14

²⁵ Isaiah 53:4-6; Galatians 3:13-14; 1 Peter 2:24

²⁶ Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:10; Exodus 16:8

²⁷ Exodus 22:28; Psalms 105:14-15; Acts 23:5; Romans 13:1-2, 14:4

²⁸ Genesis 12:3; Psalms 73:1; Zephaniah 2:10; Psalms 122:6

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cross and break all curses on me brought on by myself, my family, or prior generations due to cursing father or mother²⁹.

In the name of Jesus, I renounce and ask You to forgive me for every sin of participating, willingly or in ignorance, in occult practices, witchcraft, sorcery, spiritualism, and any other work of the kingdom of darkness. Those sins are nailed to the cross, and the blood of Jesus covers them. There are no unsettled claims on me because of them. All is settled for me in Christ Jesus. I break all curses handed down to me by my family, prior generations, or any other person by participating in or invoking the occult, witchcraft, sorcery, spiritualism, or any other work of the kingdom of darkness.

In the name of Jesus, I renounce and ask Your forgiveness for every sin I have committed, spoken, or thought in rebellion, disobedience, weakness, or ignorance. In Jesus' name, I break all curses brought on me by these sins. I renounce all curses on me handed down by my family or prior generations. I do not choose to practice any sins of my parents or my ancestors. I forgive my parents and ancestors for causing any curse to come upon me.

Specifically, in Jesus' name, I break the curses of:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Hardness of heart | ▪ Death | ▪ Lying/Deception |
| ▪ Apathy | ▪ Injury | ▪ Physical abuse |
| ▪ Hypocrisy | ▪ Disobedience | ▪ Perversion of God-intended roles |
| ▪ Rebellion | ▪ Emotional abuse | ▪ Trusting in people |
| ▪ Lawlessness | ▪ Sexual abuse | ▪ People-pleasing |
| ▪ Stubbornness | ▪ Sickness | ▪ Bitterness |
| ▪ Idolatry | ▪ Fear | ▪ Lust |
| ▪ Witchcraft | ▪ Un-forgiveness | ▪ Perversion |
| ▪ Sexual immorality | ▪ Demon worship | ▪ Homosexuality |
| ▪ Freemasonry | ▪ Selfishness | ▪ No fear of God |
| ▪ The occult | ▪ Pride | ▪ Sins of past generations |
| ▪ Unbelief | ▪ Covetousness | ▪ Guilt |
| ▪ Unworthiness | ▪ Robbing God | ▪ Condemnation |
| ▪ Rejection | ▪ Poverty | ▪ Judgement |
| ▪ Stealing | ▪ Accusations | ▪ Blame |
| ▪ Perfectionism | ▪ Addiction: Alcoholism, Drugs, Smoking, Food | ▪ Competition |
| ▪ Control | | |

²⁹ Exodus 20:1; Deuteronomy 27:1; Matthew 15:4

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- Manipulation
- Self-hatred
- Confusion
- Self-destruction
- Suicide
- Legalism
- Profanity
- Murder
- Perverting the gospel

I break all other unnamed curses caused by the sins of my parents and ancestors. Any curse put on me by another person is broken in Jesus' mighty name. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. Jesus in me is greater than the works of the enemy. Jesus has swept my house clean and seals my victory over Satan as accuser, hinderer, robber, deceiver, liar, destroyer, perverter, counterfeiter, defeater, discourager, sower of unbelief, author of confusion, jailer (one who keeps me in prison), darkness, oppressor, depresser, alienator, divider, tempter, setter of snares, seducer, betrayer, enemy, and minister of wrath and death³⁰.

Father God, You have washed me clean of all curses, guilt, and consequences of iniquities of prior generations. In Jesus' name, I am loosed of any bondage to any person or thing caused by any curse. I am healed of all affliction caused by any curse, and these curses are turned into blessings. I am released to the blessings of my new family bloodline in Christ Jesus my Lord. Establish me in the opposite blessing of each curse on this list as You fill me continually with Your Holy Spirit³¹. Thank You, Lord. I give You all glory, honor, and praise. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Forgiveness

What forgiveness is, and what it isn't:

Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgetting may be the result of forgiveness, but it is never the means. While God says He will remember our sins "no more"³², because He is all-knowing, He cannot forget. Remembering our sins "no more" means God will never use the past against us³³. In the same way, when we forgive, we are saying we will not bring up the past against the other person again. When we bring up the past against others, we have not forgiven.

Forgiveness is a choice, an act of the will. Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we can do. It is true that forgiveness can be difficult, as it pulls against our concept of justice. We naturally want revenge. However, we are told never to take our own revenge³⁴. Our hearts ask, "Why should I let them off the hook" and that is precisely the problem. We are still hooked to them, still tied by an offense or

³⁰ Exodus 20:5, 34:7; Proverbs 14:1; Jeremiah 32:18; Lamentations 5:7; James 3:9; 1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:15; 1 John 4:4

³¹ Revelation 12:11; Matthew 16:19; Jeremiah 17:14; Deuteronomy 23:5

³² Hebrews 10:17

³³ Psalm 103:12

³⁴ Romans 12:19

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wounding. We need to let them off our hook to receive healing. But they are never off God's hook. He will deal with them in perfect justice, the very thing we can never do.

We may say, "You don't understand how much these people hurt me!" But the truth is until we let them go, they are still hurting us. We can only stop the pain by releasing them into forgiveness. We forgive for our sake, so we can be free. Forgiveness isn't an issue between us and those who have offended us. It's between us and God.

Forgiveness is costly. It is agreeing to live with the consequences of the other person's sin. No one really forgives without bearing the consequences of the other person's sin. However, we must admit we are going to live with those consequences anyway. Our only choice is whether we will do so in the bitterness of un-forgiveness or the freedom of forgiveness. Where is the justice? It is in the cross, which makes forgiveness legally and morally right: "For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all"³⁵.

How do we forgive from our heart? We acknowledge the hurt, bitterness, and sometimes even hatred we have in our hearts. If our forgiveness doesn't acknowledge our emotions, it will be incomplete. Many feel the pain of interpersonal offences, but they won't or don't know how to acknowledge the pain. We must let God bring the pain to the surface, so it can flow over to Jesus who carries away our sorrows³⁶. This is where freedom from the past happens.

We must decide that we will bear the burden of the other person's offences by not using that information against them in the future. This doesn't mean we tolerate sin. We must always take a stand against sin, and we have the right to confront in love³⁷.

We must not wait until we feel like forgiving, otherwise we will never get there. Freedom is what is gained from forgiveness, not a feeling. However, feelings will heal over time as forgiveness is released and Satan loses the influence he has in our life because of un-forgiveness³⁸.

As we pray, God may bring to mind offenses, people and experiences we have forgotten. We must let Him do this even if it is painful. We must remember He is doing this for our sake. God wants us to be free. We must not rationalize or explain away the offender's behavior. Forgiveness is dealing with our pain and leaving the other person to God. Positive feelings will follow in time but freeing ourselves from the past is the critical issue for the present.

We must not say "Lord, please help me to forgive" because He is already helping us. We must not say "Lord, I want to forgive" because that would be bypassing the actual choice to forgive, which is our responsibility. We must remain with each offense until we are sure we have dealt with all the remembered pain: what they did, how they hurt us, how they made us feel (rejected, unloved, unworthy, dirty, etc.).

³⁵ Romans 6:10

³⁶ Isaiah 53:4

³⁷ Matthew 18:15-17

³⁸ Ephesians 4:26-27

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How often do we need to forgive the same person? We need to forgive as often as we remember the pain or offense, and some people will need to be forgiven many times before we are truly free.

What are the results if we stubbornly refuse to forgive? Jesus speaks to the seriousness of unforgiveness in our life, as He spoke about a servant who was forgiven a huge financial debt by his master but refused to forgive a fellow servant a very small financial deb.

Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

Matthew 18:32-35

Jesus warns that even our prayer life is affected by un-forgiveness³⁹. He calls us to drop all resentment and bitterness toward others, to release them from what they owe us, and to let go of all our expectations that they will ever make things right by us.

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:27

... bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Colossians 3:13

Then, having forgiven, Jesus calls us to do the opposite of what we were doing in our bitterness. "Love" in this passage is not an emotion, but our treatment of others.

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.

Luke 6:27-28

Sample prayers to release forgiveness:

General prayer to forgive someone who has hurt you

³⁹ Mark 11:24-25

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Thank You, Jesus, for dying that I might be forgiven. By an act of my will, I now choose to forgive those who have hurt me. I forgive [person's name] for [name deeds] and making me feel [list feelings]. I release [person's name] into the freedom of my forgiveness. I give up my right to be paid back for what I suffered when [person's name] sinned against me, and in so doing, I declare my trust in You alone as my righteous judge. In Jesus' name.

Prayer of repentance for sins harbored

Father, I confess that, as a result of being hurt, I have allowed myself to hold [name attitude: anger, resentment, bitterness, etc.] in my heart against [person's name(s)]. I acknowledge this as sin, and I now repent and turn from this behavior. Please cleanse me from these evil attitudes. I do not want them in my heart any more. And please heal me where I have been wounded. In Jesus' name.

Forgiving yourself

Thank You, Father, for forgiving me for [name sins]. I now choose to forgive myself for these things which You have already forgiven. In Jesus' name.

To break the lie/inner vows

Father, I confess that I have believed the lie that [name lie or vow]. I now repent of this sin and revoke those words. In the name of Jesus, I break the power of these words and declare them null and void, no longer able to influence me. By the sword of the Spirit, I cut myself free from them and all their effects. In Jesus' name.

"Forgiveness" of God

I confess that I have blamed You, Lord, for things which were not Your doing. I recognize this to be sin, and I ask You to forgive me. I know that You hate what Satan has done in my life. Thank You for loving me and promising to set me free. In Jesus' name.

Those who have been betrayed by a parent and transferred mistrust to their heavenly Father:

Lord, I renounce the lies I've believed about You because of the way my earthly parents treated me. I declare the truth that You are not like my earthly father/mother. You are totally loving and faithful.

Those who feel responsible for holding their dysfunctional family together or being a parent's emotional support:

Lord, I renounce the lie that I am responsible for being a savior to the people around me or that I must always be responsible for others by being the strong one. Thank you that it's all right for me to be honest about my own needs. Thank you that when I am weak, You are strong within me⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ 2 Corinthians 12:9

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For those who have been constantly put down by the authority figures in their lives:

Lord, I renounce the lie that I am unworthy and insignificant. I declare the truth that I am [name], your special child, and I am precious to You, and I bind myself to that truth.

or

Lord, I renounce the lie that I am a helpless victim like I felt when I was a child. I announce the truth that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me⁴¹ and I bind myself to that truth.

⁴¹ Philippians 4:13