

Prayer Ministry Training

Session One

Prayers That Release God's Power

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:7, 8

1. Are the words we pray for God's sake?
2. Are the words we pray for the sake of the person we are praying with?
3. Are the words we pray for our sake?

Prayer Requests

- Pray for V who is struggling with depression.
- Pray for C whose newborn baby was diagnosed with cancer.
- Pray for a single mom and her daughter who are new to Edmonton; that their van would get fixed promptly and that they would find a new home and make new Christian friends this fall.
- Pray for J in her desire to follow God's will for her life.

Three Ways We Pray That Releases God's Power

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 14:13, 14

1. Praying in the power of _____.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 John 5:14-15

2. Praying in the power of _____.

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Matthew 18:19-20

3. Praying in the power of _____.

How we understand, practice and experience praying with and for others will influence how we pray and our frequency of our praying.

Prayers That Release God's Power

1. Praying in the power of Jesus' name.

Praying from our worshipful surrender to Jesus.

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 14:13, 14

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

John 15:7

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

2. Praying in the power of God's will prayed in Jesus' name.

Praying into what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 John 5:14-15

3. Praying in the power of agreement in God's will prayed in Jesus' name

Praying in agreement with Jesus and another person into what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:19-20

Knowing the Voice of Jesus

What are the ways that you most clearly sense, see, experience or hear God?

- Through Jesus, coming to know His voice and leading, we come to know God's character and nature.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:14, 15a, 27

- We need to learn to be sensitive to what is from Jesus and what is not from Jesus.

For God speaks again and again though people do not recognize it. Job 33:14

- He will divinely inspire our thoughts or move our emotions by the same Spirit.
- In corporate or individual worship, in personal testimony, in the reading/hearing of scripture, through anointed preaching and teaching in various forms, in corporate prayer or prayer ministry, through music, art, dance, creation, in a video or dramatic presentation, in our participation in some way that God is extending His grace to others or other ways as God leads.
- He will speak to or move us through nature, music, art, a book or movie, the words and kindness of others, in dreams and visions and in our everyday experiences of life.
- Jesus also speaks to us through conviction of our need and sin, revealing the availability of His forgiveness and grace.
- When we hear His voice in the here and now of today, we need to listen and respond.

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." Hebrews 4:7

- If what we are hearing, seeing, feeling or sensing is from Jesus it will...
 - Be consistent with what is revealed in scripture regarding the character and nature of God.
 - Be affirmed within community with others who follow Jesus. *Wisdom in the counsel...*
 - Be consistent with love; patience, kindness, humility, seeking what is best, rejoicing in the truth, protective, never condemning or accusing. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
 - Stir and move us to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, ways consistent with the fruit of the Holy Spirit;. Galatians 5:22, 23
 - If corrective, bring conviction and an invitation to His forgiveness and change without shame or condemnation. He never devalues or disqualifies us. Romans 8:1, 2
 - Affirm hope and a future for us, never fear, worry, anxiety despair or hopelessness. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God..."* Philippians 4:6
 - Be clear and not confusing or convoluted. *"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."* Matthew 18:3

Listening

“For God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it.”

Job 33:13

- We can take it as a given that God repeatedly speaks to us, though we need to learn how to hear/sense/intuit/recognize Him.
- Learning to recognize the voice of God is essential – but we need to relax and realize God’s Spirit dwells within every believer. We do not need a prophet or teacher to know God or hear His voice. *No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.* Hebrews 8:11
- All Christians have some capacity to hear God – we would not be saved if we could not. This is not about gifting or personality type which affect the ways we hear, but not our ability to hear.
- We must become like children to know Jesus’ voice and follow Him. This is not about intellect or maturity or something mentally complex that we must figure out. Our intellect or our “adulthood” gets in the way. Jesus saying, “*My sheep hear my voice...*,” tells us that this is the supernatural birthright of every son and daughter of God. Some times people need help recognizing all the ways that God speaks and leads. I have found often they are already responding to Him but may have not recognized His leading. It is also true that people are doing things they know are wrong but avoid the simple truth that the knowing comes from God.
- Sometimes people are blocked in their ability to hear God. Jesus may lead you to pursue this before praying into the issue they are asking prayer for.
- As followers of Jesus and as prayer ministers it is vitally important we are growing in our capacity to hear God and are resolving any blocks to our hearing.

Listening Exercise

Ask Jesus **one of the following questions** and write down any thought, sense, picture, memory, or any other impression you may have.

1. Jesus, what is your favourite meeting place for us?
2. Jesus, what game would you and I play together? Why?
3. Jesus, what would be your favourite meal to have with me? Why?

Find another person at your table to share what you heard or sensed – share even if it did not make sense. If you did not hear anything, – do not be discouraged but continue to ask Jesus simple questions and be prepared to be surprised in how He answers.

Blocks to Hearing/Sensing/Seeing God

As we go through this list, take a deep breath and rest in God's ability and willingness to highlight for you anyways you may be blocked in your hearing Him.

Why We May Experience a Block To Hearing God.

- 1. We miss hearing when we do not recognize all the creative and varied ways God speaks to us.
For God speaks again and again though people do not recognize it. Job 33:14
- 2. We miss hearing when we are too busy, distracted or anxious.
Be still, and know that I am God Psalm 46:10
- 3. We look to ourselves to determine truth. Our sinful nature resists knowing/hearing God.
"Anywhere but God" is the sinful nature's motto. Galatians 5:1
- 4. We fail to respond to the stirring of our hearts to seek God. Jeremiah 33:3; Philippians 3:12,16
- 5. Our brokenness and wounding cause us to be afraid of what He will speak to us. 1 John 4:18
- 6. Our sin creates a barrier when we resist the Spirit's conviction. We become insensitive to God.
Isaiah 59:2
- 7. The demonic will try and block or interfere with our ability to know God. 2 Corinthians 4:4
- 8. We are trying too hard to hear and get it right out of fear we will miss what God has for us.
- 9. We may not hear God because of a preconceived idea of what we think He will speak or what we want Him to speak. Sometimes His answer is, "Wait," or, "Take a deep breath and trust me," or "First I want you to do this..." [Proverbs 3:5-6](#)
- 10. Sometimes we are in the in-between time from when He has spoken a particular thing and its fulfillment. He speaks to remind us to take hold and press into what He has spoken and not let it be stolen away.

Blocks to Hearing God: Exercise

Look at the boxes you have checked off. In a moment of quiet right now agree with Jesus in whatever may apply to you, such as busyness, distraction, unbelief or mistrust. Ask for His forgiveness and grace for whatever is needed that you can hear Him more clearly. You may have identified a block that will require some additional prayer and/or ministry.

At your table pray together for greater freedom and sensitivity to hear God.

Prayers That Release God's Power Exercise

Agreement in God's will prayed in Jesus' name.

Prayer in the power of; **Jesus' name.**

Praying from worshipful surrender to Jesus.

John 14:13, 14; John 15:7; Hebrews 5:7

Prayer in the power of; **God's will prayed in Jesus' name.**

Praying from our participation in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

1 John 5:14-15

Prayer in the power of; **Agreement in God's will prayed in Jesus' name.**

Matthew 18:19-20

Large Group

Listen to these Prayer Requests to see/hear whatever sense you may have of what Jesus is doing.

Remember – it may be a scripture verse or an insight or question to ask, an emotion stirring, a thought or picture, encouragement or something you draw from your own experience.

Pray for T whose mother passed away.

Pray for S who is going down a spiral of drug addiction again

Pray for M who is separated from her spouse and is struggling with the heartbreaking decision to sell their home.

Pray for G who is looking for a job and for a special relationship.

It is okay if you do not hear anything in addition to the simple request - pray for the request.

Small Group

- We will take a moment of quiet together to ask Jesus about a simple personal prayer request that you can share. (One sentence without any detailed explanation of the circumstances.)
- Then in groups of three, each person of you take a turn to share their request and the other two listen for a moment to whatever sense you may have of what Jesus is doing that may not have been part of the request. If you sense something that is not encouraging then do not pray that on behalf of the person in this exercise. Then the two people listening each take no more than one minute to pray..

Heart Activation

- As mentioned God makes Himself and His ways known in many lovely and creative ways; our minds illuminated, our emotions stirred, our imaginations inspired, our consciences made tender, our intuition sharpened, our will strengthened to choose and act as God leads.
- As God makes Himself and His ways known He engages our hearts.
- One of the most powerful ways God engages our heart is through scripture.
- When we read with an open heart, Jesus, the Living Word, breathes again on scripture that it becomes His living, spoken, God-breathed word to us in the moment, relevant, applicable and powerful.
- Our hearts being activated is always about God initiating and our responding.
- He is always the initiator and we are always the responder. He leads, we follow.
- This is a foundational truth of our relationship with God and is particularly relevant for prayer ministry.
- In everything we do as followers of Jesus, and for prayer ministry specifically, this sensitivity and responsiveness to whatever God's Spirit initiates is key.
- We want our hearts to be sensitive, open and responsive to Jesus – at all times and specifically when praying with others.
- Without heart-activation, in its many subtle and dramatic expressions, there is no true opportunity for healing, for freedom or for change.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

Listening Exercise

Relax – take a deep breath. This is not being graded. There is no need for us to “accomplish” something. We simply want to be present to Jesus – the Living Word.

1. As the passages are read notice, notice what stands out for you, impresses you, moves you emotionally or brings a new understanding or encouragement, comfort or direction.
2. It is meant to be personal not analytical – what stands out for you. It may be a phrase or verse from one of the passages or a theme from all the passages.
3. We will wait a minute after the verses are read to pause and further reflect on the passages.
4. Share with your table group your experience and/or what stood out from listening to the scripture passages.

ONE The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
The LORD protects the simple-hearted;
when I was in great need, he saved me.
Be at rest once more oh my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.
For you, oh LORD, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

Psalm 116:5-9

TWO God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalm 46:1-3, 10

THREE No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.
For I am sure that neither death nor life,
nor angels nor rulers,
nor things present nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:37-39

FOUR To him who is able to keep you from stumbling
and to present you before his glorious presence
without fault and with great joy
to the only God our Savior
be glory, majesty, power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
before all ages, now and forevermore!
Amen.

Jude 24, 25

Simple (Brief) Prayer Model

1. **Listening/Discerning:** Simple Faith, Simple Question, Simple Discerning
2. **Prayer:** Simple Prayers of Agreement
3. **Next Steps:** Simple Suggestions, Simple Self-Care

1. Listening/Discerning

Simple Faith

People around us and close to us are in need. They may need direction or comfort, or may be struggling in a relationship or with various pressures and stresses in this world. If you are part of a prayer team people will come to you with significant difficulties and perhaps in distress. *Stay rooted in the truth of Jesus' love for the person, His willingness to make a way for them and His power to bring divine grace so they can follow.* Remember to introduce yourself if you do not know the person.

Simple Question: "What would you like prayer for?"

The person may already have identified a specific request or need. Use the question above if they need help to identify a specific prayer request. If a person begins to tell you all of the circumstances behind their prayer request, gets off track or has multiple needs or prayer requests gently direct them back to **"What would you like prayer for – what is the most important need right now?"**

There maybe a request that you cannot agree with, such as, "I want to win the lottery." We will agree with requests that are consistent with God's character and nature and surrendered to His purposes. We may need to find another request to agree with, such as praying for provision, peace or contentment.

Simple Listening/Discerning

Having identified the need or prayer request, take a moment of quiet and listen to Jesus for any specific leading. Examples may include: a verse, a stirring of your emotions to reflect God's heart, a picture, an additional question, a highlight on something the person shared or an intuitive sense into something deeper about the person (and perhaps a deeper need that Jesus wants to minister to).

2. Prayer

Simple Prayers of Agreement

Ask the person if they are comfortable to pray, and if so, invite them to do so. If they are not sure what to say, then suggest they talk to Jesus as they just did with you, asking Him for what they need. Once they pray you can add anything that is on your heart. If they are not comfortable praying or have no previous experience, then you can pray for them. Check to see if they can say "Yes." to what you prayed.

Entrust the person into God's goodness and power.

Thank them for the privilege of praying with them. Follow up if you know them.

3. Next Steps

- 1) **Simple suggestions for possible ministry next steps (Prayer cards)**
- 2) **Simple Self-Care: Cleansing and Releasing Prayers For Yourself After You Pray.**

Salvation

Saved from...

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too (Jesus) shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Hebrews 2:14, 15

For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. 1 Colossians 1:13, 14

Saved by...

“But what about you?” he (Jesus) asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. John 16:15-17

...the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead - by this name this man stands here before you in good health. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:10b, 12

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8, 9

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”

Romans 10:9, 10, 13 N.L.T.

Saved to...

For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News. 2 Timothy 1:9, 10a

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Using the verses from the previous page, use your own words to summarize what we are saved from, saved by and saved to.

Saved from...

Saved by...

Saved to...

Elements of a Salvation Prayer

- A basic understanding and acknowledgement that Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin and to bring him/her into a loving relationship with God.
- Identification and confession of wrongdoing or shortcomings of sin.
- Asking Christ to come into one's life to make him/her a new creation in Christ.
- Receiving Him as Saviour and Lord.
- Thanking Him!

Follow Up

- Encourage new believers that this is the first step in living as a follower of Jesus. God's desire is that they would grow in their faith through reading the Bible and attending Church regularly.
- Ask for the person's name and contact information. Pass on this contact information to the church office so he/she can be invited to Alpha or some other expression of community life.
- You can also follow up with him/her.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

John 3:3-7

Prayers for Physical Healing

Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. James 5:14 - 16

- Prayers for healing, with or without anointing with oil, are not a guarantee of healing. However, when praying God-powerful prayers, it is a given that God will minister to the person according to His great love and wisdom. Look for what Jesus is doing. **We pray God-Powerful prayers when we pray in agreement with another person, sensitive to what Jesus is doing, from worshipful surrender to Him.**
- Currently at Beulah the anointing of oil for healing prayers in a more formal setting, such as altar prayer or Prayer Gatherers, is reserved for present or past elders or pastors. However, the oil does not have any power of itself, it is symbolic of the Holy Spirit and healing. The emphasis is not on the oil but on the humble request of the person seeking prayer and the faithful response of the person praying. Pray for someone who asks, trusting in Jesus as the Healer. Isaiah 53:5
- Also, notice the direction in James (quoted above) regarding forgiveness where needed. This emphasizes the healing of the heart/soul as well as the body.
- When seeking prayer for physical healing, people are typically able to make their request clear so you should not need to ask many questions for clarity. This type of healing prayer is also relevant for those who are weary, discouraged, weak or defeated.
- Get sufficient detail to pray specifically, but avoid getting into an in-depth medical history.
- When the physical issue has been long-term and/or is very debilitating or terminal then be sensitive to the heart (mental and emotional) condition of the person as they share. Prolonged physical struggle and pain grinds away at a person. Are they discouraged, fearful, resigned or angry, or have they surrendered their life to God and are struggling rightly to find God's peace?
- If they are surrendered and finding God's peace, then affirm this and pray for this to be even more deeply established. If they are discouraged, fearful, resigned or angry then be sensitive to Jesus if He leads you to ask a question about this. They need the Living Word to speak to them. Ask Jesus what may block them from hearing. Jesus may lead you to pray for peace for their hearts as well as healing for their bodies.
- When praying for a person who is struggling significantly, particularly when they are struggling in their relationship with God, the prayer minister needs to be mindful that she/he stays rooted in the goodness and power of God without feeling the need to defend Him or correct the person.
- Before you pray for physical healing, consider asking the person if there is anything they need to confess or make right with God.

Possible Next Steps

- 1 Continue to grow in experiencing God and becoming more sensitive to His voice.
Walking With God – John Eldredge
- 2 Notice and pursue opportunities to pray for others in the moment.
- 3 Join the Altar prayer team or Monday Night Prayer Gatherers
- 4 Inquire about joining the prayer ministry teams.
- 5 For other possible ministry involvement consider taking the Leadership 101 class.

Commissioning/Closing Prayer

Jesus, we pray Paul's commission in Ephesians 1 over every person who is here today.

"May He give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better, and so 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 His holy people, and His incomparably great power for us who believe.

We release each person into the ministry purposed by God and we ask that you would reveal your perfect will to each one. We pray protection in Jesus' name over everything placed under each person's authority, physically, emotionally, spiritually, financially and over his or her family. We commit each person to your safe keeping, and we ask that you would lead us all not only into deeper understanding of how to pray, but also how to participate more fully with You advancing Your Kingdom.

Prayer Ministry Training

Session Two

Review: Praying God-Powerful Prayers

1. Prayer in the power of; Jesus’ name

Praying from worshipful surrender to Jesus.

John 14:13, 14; John 15:7; Hebrews 5:7

2. Prayer in the power of; God’s will prayed in Jesus’ name

Praying from our participation in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

1 John 5:14-15

3. Prayer in the power of; agreement in God’s will prayed in Jesus’ name

Praying in agreement with Jesus and another person in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

Matthew 18:19-20

Called to Prayer

As followers of Jesus we are all called to ...

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Ephesians 6:18a

Complete this sentence using the underlined parts from the above verses.

As followers of Jesus we are all called to be _____

“What might hinder us from praying for another person?

Write down what might apply to you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Table Group Prayer – Each person share one thing that might hinder you with your table group.

Then each person prays for him or herself.

Eight Step Ministry Model

- 1) **Step One:** Focus on Jesus
- 2) **Step Two:** Listening to Discern
- 3) **Step Three:** Prayers of Agreement and Confession
- 4) **Step Four:** Prayers of Forgiveness
- 5) **Step Five:** Prayers of Repentance
- 6) **Step Six:** Prayers of Deliverance
- 7) **Step Seven:** Prayers of Comfort and Blessing
- 8) **Step Eight:** Ending a Session/Next Steps

Not every step will be necessary and there may be a fluid movement between steps.

Eight Step Ministry Model

Step One: Focus on Jesus

“... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith...”

Hebrews 12:1b, 2a

The Need to Focus on and be Grounded in Jesus in Prayer Ministry

1. We can be overwhelmed by the person’s emotional distress; pain, frustration, hopelessness or anger.
2. We can be overwhelmed by the abuse or trauma people have suffered.
3. We can be overwhelmed by the complexity of a person’s life or relationships.
4. We can feel and be influenced their negative expectations or judgments on God, themselves, others and life. For example, “God cannot be trusted.”, “God is punishing me.”, “I am not worth anything.”, “You must be strong.”, “Women always or never...”, “Men always or never...”
5. We can unknowingly look to ourselves rather than focus on Jesus and be overly insecure or confident.
6. We can minister to others to meet our own needs.
7. We can encounter demonic oppression against the person or against those who help.

We Focus on Jesus Through Worship

- Foundational to prayer ministry, foundational to everything we do, is to live with our focus on Jesus in reverent submission or worshipful surrender. As our true and proper worship of God we offer our lives, our bodies as living sacrifices, which is holy and pleasing to God. Romans 12:1
- In our worship, as demonstrated through surrendered lives, we are led by His Spirit.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

Romans 8:14

Focus on Jesus Grounds Us

1. The more we know who God is, and who we are in Him, the more we will focus on Him in worship and surrender by the power of His Spirit.
2. God loves us and He loves the person we are praying with.
3. Everything necessary for this person’s healing, restoration and freedom has already been accomplished by Jesus on the cross.
4. God is utterly committed to bring this healing, restoration and freedom.
5. Jesus always knows what needs to be done and He always does all things very well.
“...he has done everything well.” Mark 7:37
6. God has invited us to be part of what He is doing in this person’s life. This is His ministry and we are invited to be part. He leads we follow.

How might prayer ministry be impacted if we were focused on Jesus through worship?

Eight Step Ministry Model
Step Two: Listening to Discern

Ways We Listen: Listening is foundational to prayer ministry. We listen on several levels. First, we listen to Jesus. In a ministry team we listen to what others are sensing and hearing. We listen to the person we are praying for; analytically and empathically. We also need to listen, or pay attention to, our own thoughts, feelings, responses or reactions in the experience of the ministry.

1. **Listen to Jesus as you listen to them** – this might be a thought that comes to you, a scripture verse, a picture or an emotional response stirred in you (compassion, encouragement, caution). Notice what you want to explore or know more about or a hunch you have. Be aware of Jesus using your spiritual gifting in a word of knowledge or discerning the presence a deceiving spirit.
2. **Listen to Jesus together as a team.** Team means the ministry team and the person being prayed for. You are all in this together – seeking together the good outcome that Jesus has planned. You as a team bring experience and training as prayer ministers and the person being prayed for is the expert on their life. Ask Jesus questions and listen to what you all sense in response –particularly the person you are praying for. It is vitally important that the person being prayed for is in agreement when you pray together in order to pray God-powerful prayers.
3. **Listen to the person.** Seek to understand their story. Listen to clarify and acknowledge what is their need, struggle, problem or pain. Listen empathically as well as for understanding.
4. **Listen to the person** to clarify a presenting problem or issue. There maybe multiple problems or issues. Ask them to identify what is most important or pressing. You need clarity in order to bring focus to your collective discernment and praying.
5. **Listen to the person** for key words or phrases they speak which may summarize their experience or a perception. Look for words that have significant emotion attached. As you listen, ask Jesus if you are to stop in the moment and explore something further, or let them continue to share their story and come back to explore further at a later time. You are looking for what Jesus wants to highlight when you pray together. Listen also for seeming contradictions such as, “I trust God with my life...” and “I am so worried about...” Explore this further by asking the person to help you understand the seeming contradiction in them saying both things. The words we speak reveal what is in our heart. Luke 6:45
6. **Listen to ourselves,** our thoughts, feelings, responses or reactions in the experience of ministry.

Consider taking notes and use their words when you summarize or ask questions for clarification.

Step Two: Listening to Discern

Listening for the Causes of Personal Difficulty or Crisis

Difficulty or crisis is sometimes one but often a combination of issues, including the following:

A. Wounding and Brokenness from the Fallenness of this World

This is wounding that is not connected to a specific person and happens outside of our control such as financial difficulty from world market downturn.

B. Wounding and Brokenness from the Wrongdoing or Sin of Another Person

This is wounding that came from another person's words, actions or negligence. Their harm to us may have been intentional or unintentional. This wounding can result from harmful things done or good things not done.

C. Our Own Wrongdoing or Sin

These are the sinful self-life ways we avoid, cope with or overcome our wounding, pain and brokenness. They can also be the ways we try to meet our deep needs (below). It is self-rescue instead of Jesus' rescue. Our ways of rescue create further wounding brokenness, hardship, conflict and turmoil for ourselves and those we are in relationship with.

D. Our Unmet Needs (Real or perceived – ours or someone we care about)

We all have legitimate and deep God-given needs: for identity, for belonging, to be unconditionally loved and accepted, for purpose, for hope and a future. We can have wrong ideas about what we truly need or what must happen to meet our legitimate deep needs.

E. The Father's Discipline.

When the Father brings correction, discipline or pruning. Hebrews 12:8-11

F. Faith Opportunity (to believe and stand in something God has spoken to us).

Whenever God reveals or speaks something to us (which releases faith) we need to take hold of this truth and choose to act consistently with what God has spoken regardless of whatever may be contrary in our own thoughts and feelings, circumstances or what others may say to discourage us. Believing is our part in response to God imparting faith.

G. Demonic Oppression.

We can encounter demonic oppression against the person or against those who help. The person may report powerful compulsive behaviour that they want to but cannot resist, they may be overcome by obsessive thoughts or may sense an oppression when awake or in their sleep. They may also see or feel an evil presence at times or in certain places, feel stuck, recognize a repeating destructive generational pattern, or feel distant and unable to hear God. Prayers for deliverance may be needed at any point during the ministry time.

Listening for Two Primary Things that Create Difficulty or Hardship

1. The wounding, pain and brokenness that come from negative experiences.
2. Our reactions to those negative experiences such as the self-centered ways that we use to avoid, cope with or overcome our wounding, pain and brokenness – our self-rescue creates more difficulty.

Why is our understanding or belief of what creates difficulty important to prayer ministry?

EXERCISE

Among your table group discuss the implications for our practice of prayer ministry if we understood what creates difficulty as the result of:

- a. The result of injustice and wounding from the world that is out of our control.**
- b. God punishing us.**
- c. God bringing suffering to refine us.**
- d. The result of our personal sin.**
- e. Because we lack faith.**

EXERCISE

Large Group – let's consider and share the implications for our practice of prayer ministry if we understood what creates difficulty as the result of one or a combination of:

- A. Wounding and Brokenness from the Fallenness of this World**
- B. Wounding and Brokenness from the Wrongdoing or Sin of Another Person**
- C. Our Own Wrongdoing or Sin**
- D. Our Unmet Needs (Real or perceived – ours or someone we care about)**
- E. The Father's Discipline.**
- F. Faith Opportunity (to believe and stand in something God has spoken to us).**
- G. Demonic Oppression.**

Step Two: Listening to Discern
Self Life versus Spirit Life

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other..."

Galatians 5:16-17a

- As followers of Jesus we have two contrary and conflicting natures: the self (self-life) and the Spirit (Spirit-life). Our inherited sinful nature or *self-life*, is self-centered and God resistant. Our new born-again Spirit empowered nature or *Spirit-life*, is God centered and sin resisting. They are in conflict with one another to determine which one will rule over us in any given moment, to influence our thinking, emotions, choices and ultimately our behaviours. Rom. 7:18-20; John 3:3-6; Gal. 5:16-17a
- Every follower of Jesus must learn to recognize and overcome their sinful nature or self-life
- In this conflict Jesus teaches us to discern true Spirit life as opposed to the false promises of self-life.
- Self life is pursuing our way of trying to meet our deepest needs or avoiding, coping with or overcoming our pain and brokenness. It is self-rescue. Jesus would enable us to recognize, desire and respond to His rescue (Spirit-life) and resist/disregard self-rescue (self-life).
- What we choose and act on is what we will sow and we will reap what we sow.

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.

Galatians 6:7-8

Discerning Self Life versus Spirit Life: Acts and Fruit

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, wild partying and other sins like these.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:19-21a, 22- 23a

- In these verses Paul's gives us a clear picture of what the obvious acts of the sinful nature or self-life in dramatic contrast to the fruit or outcome of living by the Spirit. The contrast gives clear ways to measure if we or another person is living by the Spirit or by the self-life's sin nature.
- Although the difference between the self-life and Spirit-life is often obvious the sinful nature's self-life is very deceptive. It can deceive us with a God-resistant self-righteous through human effort that is the religiousness of the Pharisees that Jesus condemned. It can be self-condemning and call it humility.

Why is it important in prayer ministry to help the person make a distinction between what is of God's Spirit and what is not; between Spirit life and self life?

Step Two: Listening to Discern
Spirit Life versus Self Life

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. Romans 8:5, 6

Dealing with the Self-Life

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, (or deny yourself) take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. Matthew 16:24, 25

- Our sinful nature or self-life deceives us so we cannot see how deeply ingrained is its self-centered manipulation, how fully it is committed to controlling us, how thoroughly it has convinced us that only its desires will bring us life and how effectively it can blind us to the destructive outcome of following its desires.

The heart (our mind, emotions and will when controlled by the sinful nature) is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9

- *The sinful nature and its self-life will lead us to any place other than to God and the life of His Spirit.*
- There is only one remedy for the sinful nature and the self-life that comes from it, it must be recognized for what it is and then resisted and utterly disregarded. It must be "put to death".

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. Romans 8:12, 13

- We overcome our self-life when we, *through the power of the Spirit*, live in Spirit life.

Invitation to Surrender

- The deepest and most important issue for any person is their relationship with God.
- Jesus sets the priority for us to first seek His Kingdom and His righteousness in our worship and our surrender to Him and living by His Spirit.
- From this place of grace, Jesus confirms that God, who already knows our needs, will meet them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6: 31-33

- Often the leading of God's Spirit, at some point in ministry, is to ask, "How is your relationship with Jesus?" If they are distant or struggling ask Jesus to reveal what hinders or separates them.
- Invite them into a prayer of agreement for God's grace to more deeply and fully surrender their life.
- Ask Jesus to show them specifically what they need to release and what their practical response is to participate with God in bring them into deeper surrender. There is always a practical response on our part to whatever God initiates.

Step Two: Listening to Discern
Fruit to Root Tracking

Fruit to Root Tracking

- Tracking current behaviour, emotion or thought is possible because of the law of sowing and reaping. *For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* Luke 6:38
Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always reap what you sow. Galatians 6:7
- We identify a “fruit”, which is some troubling thought, emotion or behaviour we are experiencing in the present that repeats itself and we cannot easily identify why. **This is reaping.**
- We then ask questions and follow where Jesus leads to track the fruit back to the root, tracking the present difficulty back to the original wounding, how we reacted and how we learned to cope. **This was the sowing.** (There is a Sowing And Reaping Enrichment at the end of session notes)
- Fruit to root tracking is used when a person does not know where the current troubling thoughts, emotions or behaviour comes from – which often reflects a family of origin root.
- In fruit to root tracking we are looking for fruit that is being experienced repeatedly, troubling thoughts, emotions or behaviour that may occur in a pattern.
- For example, a person shares that they shut down whenever they are in a conflicted situation and we ask “Where did you first need to do this?” They share about an overbearing and angry parent. They may have never made this connection or if they did they may not have considered the need to forgive their parent and to be forgiven of any judgment they made.
- The reaping of the fruit can only be broken when the root is dealt with.
- No good fruit comes from a bad root. “I am hard on my children because I want them to turn out well.” or “I could not let go when she left me because I love her.” Matthew 7:16, 17

Practicing Fruit to Root Tracking

- It is very important in ministry to clearly identify the fruit: an issue, problem or pattern in thought, emotion or behaviour. Ministry sessions can wander aimlessly if there are too many issues or too much complexity from multiple problems with no clearly defined issue(s).
- Issues do overlap, but we need to clearly identify and choose one at a time to pursue.
- In a 90 minute ministry session it is reasonable to spend 30 minutes just listening and clarifying. For a person to share their story without being judged is healing in itself. However, a person may have difficulty in knowing what is helpful to share so our intentional questions bring direction.
- Fruit to root tracking can take some detective work – piecing the clues together from the person’s story and Jesus’ leading, then offering it tentatively to see if it fits for them.
- However, the root of a problem or difficulty is typically not complicated. Avoid over analysis. The person being prayed for may never have made the connection between the present “fruit” and the originating root – but once it is discerned the connection is usually clear and simple.
- Look also for the fruit of righteousness, the reaping in a person’s life from God based on their choices and actions that that were a sowing according to the Spirit of God. Righteous fruit has a righteous root, which can also be tracked, affirmed and blessed to encourage the person. Ephesians 5:8-10

Step Two: Listening to Discern
Bitter Roots – Judgments, Expectations and Vows

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. Hebrews 12:15

What Is a Root of Bitterness?

- A root of bitterness grows in our heart when we are unable or unwilling to forgive where we have been wounded. Our sinful reaction to wounding through judgment, offense and condemnation of another or of ourselves grows a root of bitterness that springs up harming or defiling us and others.
- This is often sown in childhood and can be forgotten, but we will reap the fruit in adulthood. We can also minimize or excuse the damage done to us; “My alcoholic dad or angry mom did the best they could.” (Merciful people are most likely to do this, but it is not forgiveness and the damage remains.)
- We may also have blamed ourselves as “bad” children – in which case we may have a bitter root judgment or expectation against ourselves.
- We know we have bitter roots when there is bitter fruit, seen as destructive patterns in our lives.

Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:45

- Fruit to root tracking is an effective way to minister to a person with bitter roots. Sometimes the resentment or offense towards the person who caused the wound is known but it can also be hidden.
- The unresolved anger and unforgiveness in a judgment can give Satan a foothold. Ephesians 4:26, 27
- The longer a judgment goes without repentance, the larger it can grow. Hosea 8:7a
- When judgments are made against our parents, we reap damage from both the judgment and the dishonouring of our father and mother. Deuteronomy 5:16
- Any one of us can have a root of bitterness through unhealed wounding, unresolved judgment and negative expectations. We may not be aware of having a bitter root but through the law of sowing and reaping we will experience the consequences of it and can track it from fruit to root.

Bitter Root Judgments

- A bitter root judgment is where we have judged, or held an offense against a person who has hurt us.
- We need to pay particular attention to judgments made against parents as these can powerfully affect our marriage and parenting relationship with our own children.
- A bitter root judgment can also move from a specific person and become generalized. For example, our grade one teacher was harsh with us, and later we find we have difficulty with professors or instructors in post secondary education or training.
- Making an accurate assessment of wrong done and praying through forgiveness is not a judgment.
- There is also a place in church discipline to “judge” a person who claims to be a follower of Jesus, yet his or her life exhibits immoral, idolatrous or criminal behaviour. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
- Bitterness, unforgiveness or self-righteousness indicates the presence of a judgment. Rom. 14:10-13

Bitter Root Expectations

- A bitter root expectation is something we can add to a judgment. From our wounding, unforgiveness and judgment we form conclusions and then expectations about ourselves, others, God, or life.
- Bitter root expectations become like a self-fulfilling prophecy. In this we unconsciously behave in certain ways and “push” people to fulfill our expectation. “*Women are controlling.*”; “*Life is hard.*” “*Men cannot be depended on.*”; “*No one ever listens to me.*”
- When relationships or circumstances turn out as expected, it confirms our negative thinking and we never consider how we have influenced the outcome.
- Our bitter roots will push others to react to us in ways that fit our judgment or expectation but they are still responsible for their actions. We too are responsible for how we act towards others when pushed by their bitter roots.

Inner Vows

- A vow (or determination), made from a judgment usually involves statements such as, “I will never...” or, “I will always...” We may not remember making a vow.
- A vow would be considered a good thing if we determine to never do a particular destructive behaviour. But, this is not the case when it is rooted in wounding, judgment, unforgiveness and self-determination.
- A vow causes us to be stuck in certain behaviour – even where it is something we would never want to do. We may be able to see this “stuckness”, or not see it. For example, if we had a parent who was an alcoholic, our wounding and judgment would make us vulnerable to struggle with an alcohol addiction ourselves. However, if we also make a vow to never drink alcohol, we may from the power of that vow, never have an issue with alcohol. However, we may, have other obvious addictions (substance abuse) or subtle addictions (approval addiction). We may also have self-righteousness, inflexibility and judgement against others who drink alcohol.

Bitter Roots – Tracking Fruit to Root

- God’s law of sowing and reaping shows up clearly in the fruit of our lives when we sow a bitter root through judgement, expectation or an inner vow. Matthew 7:1, 2
- Two particular ways that we can track a bitter root judgment or expectation from fruit to root.

1. We reap a judgment in wounding others in a similar way to how I was wounded.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Romans 2:1
We judge an angry parent and find that as adults we have a problem with anger.

Any pattern in my life of how I wound others in a similar way to how I was wounded?

a) _____

b) _____

2. We reap a judgment through continuing to experience similar wounding and injustice from others.

We judge a parent who never listened to us and find we are not listened to.

Any pattern in my life of where I continue to experience similar wounding and injustice from others?

a) _____

b) _____

Sample Prayer for wounding others in a similar way to how I was wounded through reaping judgement.

Lord Jesus, I recognize I have judged _____ for _____ and have locked myself into that same behavior/attitude. I ask You to heal me where I have been wounded. I hereby surrender my right to be paid back for my loss, by the one who has sinned against me and release them to you. In so doing I declare my trust in You alone Lord Jesus; Righteous Judge and Merciful Saviour. Forgive me for my judgment and remove it from my heart. Please forgive me for the sinful ways I've reacted and for the ways in which I have done the same to others. Break the power of my judgment and empower me to sow in forgiveness so I will reap forgiveness. (Be specific in naming those you've hurt and how).

Sample Prayer for experiencing ongoing wounding and injustice from others through reaping judgement.

Lord Jesus, forgive me for judging _____ for _____. Now I see I am reaping the same pattern throughout my life. I ask You to heal me where I have been wounded. I hereby surrender my right to be paid back for my loss, by the one who has sinned against me and release them to you. In so doing I declare my trust in You alone Lord Jesus; Righteous Judge and Merciful Saviour. Forgive me for my judgment and remove it from my heart. Forgive me also for any ways that I set myself up to experience the same wounding repeatedly. Break the power of my judgment and empower me to sow in forgiveness so I will reap forgiveness. (Be specific in naming those you've hurt and how).

ENRICHMENT
Sowing and Reaping

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always reap what you sow.

Galatians 6:7

- Sowing and reaping, and the process of fruit to root tracking that comes from sowing and reaping, will help you discern the specific origins of a person's difficulty or crisis.
- Sowing and reaping is a spiritual law of God.
- The law of sowing and reaping, as an unseen spiritual force, can be compared to an unseen natural law or force such as gravity, which is also a law that God, our Creator, has established for blessing.
- We may not understand the physics behind the law of gravity but we live acknowledging and respecting the power it represents and practically apply it to our everyday lives. We cannot disregard or mock the law of gravity without eventually doing ourselves great harm.
- So it is with sowing and reaping. We will reap what we sow, regardless of our acknowledging and respecting this spiritual law
- Because of the law of sowing and reaping, what we do matters.

It dramatically affects us in this life time and profoundly more so in the eternal life that is to come.

Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature.

But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. Gal. 6:8

- God has established this law for our good – that it would work great blessing in our lives. God's Spirit leads us and empowers us to sow according to His leading and empowering that we would increasingly reap true His life.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Luke 6:37, 38

- However, the law of sowing and reaping will work against us when we sow according to the sinful nature. ***For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*** Luke 6:38

God would have us understand sowing and reaping so we would knowingly and sincerely give our lives to sow according to His Spirit, and from Him to reap eternal life.

Prayer Ministry Training

Session Three

Praying God-Powerful Prayers

1. Prayer in the power of Jesus' name

Praying from worshipful surrender to Jesus.

John 14:13, 14; John 15:7; Hebrews 5:7

2. Prayer in the power of God's will prayed in Jesus' name

Praying from our participation in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him. 1 John 5:14-15

3. Prayer in the power of agreement in God's will prayed in Jesus' name

Praying in agreement with Jesus and another person in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

Matthew 18:19-20

Eight Step Ministry Model

9) **Step One:** Focus on Jesus

10) **Step Two:** Listening to Discern

11) **Step Three:** Prayers of Agreement and Confession

12) **Step Four:** Prayers of Forgiveness

13) **Step Five:** Prayers of Repentance

14) **Step Six:** Prayers of Deliverance

15) **Step Seven:** Prayers of Comfort and Blessing

16) **Step Eight:** Ending a Session/Next Steps

Step Two: Listening to Discern

Hiding Places

In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.

Psalm 31:1, 4

Hiddenness Comes Naturally

- In the beginning Adam and Eve were “naked and unashamed”.
- Tempted by Satan that they could be like God they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Their first awareness is being self-conscious of their nakedness. Being naked (or being “known”) became something to be ashamed and afraid of. They hide from one another and God.
- This shame, fear and hiding characterize the sinful or fallen nature we have “inherited” from our first parents. This is origin of self-life and self-rescue.

From our sinful nature or self-life it is natural for us to be hidden.

Hiding Places:

- Hiding places are our wrong self-centered ways of rescue and not Jesus’ ways.
- We hide because we are afraid or ashamed to be known. This may not be conscious and deliberate.
- Our ways of hiding are well developed by the time we reach adulthood.
- Our hiding places are formed based on personality, family traits, parental modelling, and our particular subculture.
- Our hiding places are the ways we:
 - Protect ourselves from being hurt by others
 - Avoid, disconnect or find distraction from conflict, difficulty, pain or shame
 - Compensate for or cope with our insecurity and fear
 - Try to meet our needs
- Different hiding places often work together in a cycle and reinforce one another.
- Hiding places vary with different relationships and circumstances.
- Our sinful nature will try to justify our hiding places as being of God.
- We can automatically run to our hiding places instead of trusting God.

Healing

- We need to allow God to reveal our insecurity, brokenness and shame, and the fallen ways we rescue ourselves through hiddenness.
- Once we see our hiding places, we need to agree with God’s purpose that we would run to Him and not to them. Then we simply and tangibly follow Him in His practical ways of bring rescue that we would find our refuge in Him.

The way of the LORD is a refuge for the righteous.

Proverbs 10:29

HIDING PLACES WORKSHEET
Ways we self-protect, avoid, compensate or cope in our brokenness

Anger/Impatience/Frustration	
Niceness	
Rationalization/Justification - "I need or deserve this because..."	
Judgement/Criticism of others	
Self-Condensation	
Defensiveness	
Problem Solving - "I know exactly what needs to be done."	
Blaming Others – Making them responsible for my well-being	
Blaming Myself	
Withdrawal/Isolation/Disconnect - It may be physical or emotional	
Comparison to Others	
Pessimism/Negativity	
Passivity/Powerlessness	
Using a Substance Wrongly (alcohol, prescription or illegal drugs, food etc.).	
Using an Activity Wrongly (TV, computer, work, sex/masturbation, shopping, cleaning, gambling)	
Denial/Avoidance	
Self-Pity/Victim Mentality	
Being Overly Responsible for the Other Person – Trying too Hard	
Martyr Mentality - "It is my role in life to suffer."	
Indecision/Confusion	
Needing to be Right	
Control/Manipulation	
Other	
Other	
Other	

Reflection

1. Was it easy or difficult for you to identify your hiding places? Why?
2. How do your hiding places specifically hinder you from being close to God?
3. How do your hiding places specifically hinder you from being close to others?
4. Pick one of your ways of hiding (or self-rescue). What might the way of Jesus for you to do instead?

With one other person

1. Share one of the hiding places you have identified and how and when it might show up.
2. Receive forgiveness and prayers for grace and encouragement.

This Week - Look for Jesus to bring awareness of when you would run to a hiding place and follow his leading in how to live differently. This is often as simple as resisting the hiding place pattern and doing whatever is opposite.

Step Two: Listening to Discern Generational Sin

The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.

Numbers 14:18

(Speaking of the new covenant that God will make with His people) *The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.*

Ezekiel 18:20

- In the Old Testament, because sowing and reaping was carried through the bloodline, the sins sown by parents was reaped by their children, to the third and fourth generations.
- Through His prophets God declared He would make a new covenant with His people and this passing on of the curse of generational sin could be broken. Parent or child would be approved or condemned based on their own choices and actions. Ezekiel 18; Jeremiah 31:29 - 34
- This new covenant has now been established through the shed blood, sacrificial death and resurrection life of Jesus. As we receive Jesus' salvation, and become God's children, we inherit the righteousness of Jesus breaking the inheritance of generational sin.
- Through Jesus and the new covenant with God that He brings, no person needs to be in bondage or under an "unbreakable" curse because of something the fathers did, or something they did.
- However, the sin of parents can still impact their children in four ways.
 1. Genetic Inheritance (death, disease, ethnic conflict)
 2. Creating demonic access/vulnerability through sin: especially sexual sin, violence or occult.
 3. Modelling – parents and other important caretakers teach us how to live, rightly or wrongly, through their behaviour. When it is wrong then sinful habit patterns
 4. Through the law of sowing and reaping if we judge a parent. Romans 2:1
- Examples of generational sin to look for when praying with others include alcoholism and drug addiction, family violence, racism, divorce, financial and business failure, religiousness/legalism, criminal activity, occult involvement and various forms of idolatry.
- Jesus took on the curse that is against us because of our failure to live perfectly according to the law. He has redeemed us from this curse so that by grace through faith the blessing of God and the promise of the Spirit becomes ours as the children of God as we ask and receive. Galatians 3:13
- Breaking the curse of generational sin (and our own sin) requires that we personally appropriate what Jesus has done on the cross for us to receive forgiveness and break the power of generational sin and our sin through the imparted righteousness of Jesus and blessing of God.
- Just as vulnerability to sin is passed down through our family lines so are generational blessings. As prayer ministers we help others in affirmation and gratitude for God's gift of this blessing as part of their spiritual birthright. We also pray they can protect and pass this on to their children.

Practice: Generational Sin

Exercise: Do you recognize and present pattern of brokenness and sin in your own life that can be traced back one or more previous generations to your parents and their siblings and your grandparents and their siblings (or even further back)?

Examples would include alcoholism and drug addiction, family violence, racism, divorce, financial and business failure, religiousness/legalism, criminal activity, occult involvement and various forms of idolatry ... mental illness, relationship breakdown (can be specific such as between father and sons, mother and daughter, siblings, extended family), self-condemnation, control, ... see Hiding Places Worksheet.

Pray Sample Prayer as a large group.

Sample Prayer

Dear Lord I come to you on behalf of myself and the previous generations of my ancestors on both my mother's and father's side and ask forgiveness for the sins of _____. If I have participated myself I ask and receive your forgiveness and accept your grace to live righteously. Jesus, I welcome your shed blood to wash and cover these sins. In my submission, by the grace of God, and in the authority in Jesus' name I break the curse of this generational sin over myself and my children. I cancel any sowing and reaping associated with it. I agree Lord that you would bring the blessing of _____ in its place. Amen.

Step Three – Prayers of Agreement and Confession

Agreement

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!” Matthew 6:7, 8

Only God is all-knowing

- Only God is omniscient or all-knowing.
- God already knows what is happening and what is needed, *“even before you ask him”*.
- God does not need us to inform or instruct Him.
- We are the ones who need God, before we pray, to know what we need and what He is doing.
- Our priority to listen and our growing ability to hear is essential to prayer ministry.
- Praying God-powerful prayers is dependent on our agreement with what God is doing.
- God extends His invitation and power for us to follow as He leads.

Jesus’ Example

- Even though Jesus was without sin (unlike us) He depended on the Father for direction moment by moment, out of His intimate relationship.
- What Jesus spoke came only from what the Father taught him. John 12:49
- What Jesus did came only from what he saw the Father doing. John 5:19
- Jesus would teach us to live as He did, to not make judgments from what we think we know from our assessment, experience, intelligence, feelings, opinions, knowledge, or education but instead ask to see what the Father is doing and follow as He leads. Isaiah 11: 3, 4

Making Prayer Simple

- Jesus reveals what He is doing and invites us to participate. We agree and respond.
- In this way Jesus has made prayer exceedingly simple. We forsake our vain attempts to inform or instruct God and simply agree with God and the person(s) we are praying with in what Jesus is doing.
- Praying for others does not require us to be clever or learned. In fact we can miss what God is doing if we approach ministry as an intellectual or rational pursuit. *“I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”* Matthew 18:3, 4
- It is essential to have grounding in scriptural truth and principles of God’s Kingdom and very useful to have a framework for understanding prayer and ways of praying. As God leads He will powerfully use what we know. However, Jesus’ way of humble dependence on God in the moment is our model.
- We can rise above the disqualification from our insecurity or find freedom from our need to perform and simply rest in God to do what is impossible for us.
- In our worship, demonstrated through surrender, we seek God and His rule over us and He gives everything needed.

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.” Luke 12:31

Step Three – Prayers of Agreement and Confession

Confession

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Psalm 32:3-4

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. Psalm 32:5

- Unconfessed sin becomes an unbearable burden to the person who knows God; yet in confession we find cleansing, comfort, hope and healing in God’s forgiveness. 1 John 1; 8-10; James 5:16

- It is Jesus Christ, faithful and righteous, who is able and willing to forgive our sin and cleanse us.

If we confess our sins, He (Jesus) is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

- When a person knows they need forgiveness but they are having difficulty confessing or receiving forgiveness we can help them discover why they are blocked. This can come from our brokenness; shame, fear, guilt, feeling unworthy or feeling like they should be punished.
- Our sinful nature will also resist the surrender, intimacy and vulnerability of confession. Our self-centeredness is a master at avoiding responsibility for our wrong through denial, blame, minimizing, rationalizing, justifying or excusing.

Making a “Clean” Confession to God.

1. Encourage the person to be personal with Jesus, not artificial or formal, as they ask His forgiveness.
2. Have them be specific and name their wrong clearly and fully in plain words (without graphic detail).
3. Invite them to fully own the wrong they have done and to take responsibility regardless of what pressure they may have been under or what others have done. Help them avoid blame, minimizing, rationalizing or excusing. Jesus knows all of the factors that contributed to their wrong and they do not need to make a case to convince Him to forgive them – He is ready and willing to forgive.
4. Have them humbly ask for and receive forgiveness – daring to believe that God is merciful and kind.
5. Pray in agreement with them and with the Father, Jesus and the Spirit, to release the God’s forgiveness and cleansing of their sin. Pray this with specific and vivid words.

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

6. Ask if they are willing to and have forgiven themselves– this is for some people the hardest part.

Prayers of Agreement and Confession is a step to be revisited repeated in prayer ministry as you pray through the other steps of forgiveness, repentance, deliverance and comfort and blessing.

Step Four – Prayers of Forgiveness

Forgiveness

What is Forgiveness?

- Forgiveness is releasing to God the debt that we owe from our sin or releasing to God the debt that we are owed by a person's sin against us. *Forgive us our debts (sins), as we also have forgiven our debtors (those who have sinned against us).* Matthew 6:12 N.I.V.
- We release, surrender, give over ourselves or the other person to our Lord Jesus; Merciful Saviour and Righteous Judge. We do so knowing His intention is to convict, forgive and rescue, yet knowing He is the Righteous Judge.
- This release of forgiveness can be very difficult or even impossible on our own. We will need the power of God's mercy to enable us.

Review: Two primary things in life create difficulty for us

1. The experiences that create wounding, pain and brokenness.
2. The self-centered ways we try to avoid, cope with or overcome our wounding, pain and brokenness.

Helping People Receive God's Forgiveness

- When a person is convicted, ready to confess and open to receive God's forgiveness we can follow their lead or help guide their prayer if they are unsure how to proceed.
- To receive God's forgiveness for our sins we must be willing to forgive others. Matthew 6:14, 15
- The person may need help to discern the conviction of God's Spirit versus false guilt or self-blame.
- A common block to receiving God's forgiveness is that the person cannot forgive themselves. This can seem noble as they are considering the great wrong of the sin – however it is self-centered. – they are more righteous than God but we need to gently help people see it is self-centered and God resistant.
- If a person is emotionally undone in their confession, with a broken and contrite spirit, we simply need to be with them as they pour out and resist any need we may have to help them feel better.

Helping People Forgive Others

- Unforgiveness causes us to be captive, tormented and to defile others. Matt. 18:34; Heb. 12:15
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. Matthew 6:14, 15
- The greatest block to forgiving another is the idea that justice will not happen. We need to help people understand the purpose and power of forgiveness; particularly in their own life and for the Kingdom of God.
- We forgive others out of our experience of God's forgiveness to us. As receivers of His mercy we become givers of His mercy. When we have been forgiven much, we love much. When we have been forgiven little we love little. Luke 7:37

When ministering to someone who is currently being hurt by another person we need to be careful we are not drawn into taking the side of the person we are praying for - against the person who is wounding them. Our safeguard is intentionally standing on the side of Jesus and His ways of love, righteousness, mercy, and grace; on behalf of the person we are praying for and for the person they are in conflict with.

Helping People Seek Forgiveness From Others

- Being known in sorrow in our sin against another person we seek first to honour God and His ways.
- We also seek what is healing and restoring for the other person. We do not look to them meet our needs; to release us from our guilt or comfort us in sorrow over our sin. The forgiveness and comfort we need come from God, through the completed sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
- We are to humble ourselves and seek forgiveness from others even where their wrong may be greater or when they are unwilling to admit their wrong against us. Some people may be unsafe to do this with.
- We fully confess our wrong without excuse or blame.

Authority To Release His Forgiveness

- God has given us the authority to release His forgiveness when we pray in agreement in Jesus' name. This is a humbling invitation that we receive joyfully and with awe.

If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

John 20:23

Identifying Unforgiveness	
Are you quick to make evaluations or judgments of other's actions?	
Do you have prejudice against certain people or stereotype people depending on their; age, gender, race, politics, occupation, etc.?	
Do you ever speak of yourself or others in a sarcastic or belittling way?	
Are you critical of yourself or others?	
Are you harsh or condemning towards yourself or others?	
Do you have strong opinions that cause you to be quick to speak and slow to listen?	
Is your sleep or rest disturbed?	
Are you afflicted physically in your body?	
Does seeing a particular person trigger a strong emotional reaction?	
Does seeing a particular person cause you to feel like a child again?	
Do you avoid people who have hurt you?	
Do you avoid people who remind you of those who hurt you?	
Do you still rehearse speeches or imagine getting even with those who hurt you?	
Do you have difficulty sincerely blessing someone who hurt you?	
Does remembering a particularly hurtful event trigger a strong emotional reaction?	
Does memory of the past only bring pain?	
Does heaviness return quickly after joyful times?	
Do you experience unexplained physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion or torment?	
Is there a reoccurring pattern of sin or difficulty in your life? Eph. 4:26,27	
Do you have difficulty confronting others or receiving correction?	
Do you struggle with resentment?	

Note: Answering yes to some of these symptoms could be explained by other reasons. Ask Jesus to help you understand the root causes of the symptoms.

Step Five: Prayers of Repentance

The Gift of Repentance

For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right.

2 Corinthians 7:10-12

- Repentance is a great gift of life from a loving Father that leads us away from death and into His life.
- Repentance is the 180 degree change that comes in our lives when we turn fully from a particular sinful self-centered way that we try to rescue ourselves to instead embrace Jesus' way of life.
- We receive this gift of repentance as the Holy Spirit brings clean conviction of our sin and leads us to recognize our need for Jesus' rescue and humbly surrender our lives in response. John 16:8,9
- God's conviction brings a godly sorrow over our sin; the ways we have damaged ourselves, others and disregarded the grace of God. Godly sorrow is the opposite of the regret, shame and self-condemnation that is worldly sorrow, which does not bring the life of Jesus but brings spiritual death.
- We are met in our godly sorrow with revelation and experience of God's great patience and kindness towards us; **it is the kindness and patience of God that leads us to repentance.** Romans 2:4
- In knowing God's kindness more deeply our hard hearts are broken, our broken hearts healed and our healed hearts filled with a sweeter devotion and love for God.
- Godly sorrow becomes a holy, Spirit empowered zeal for change, bringing wholeness (salvation).
- Repentance and the Father's discipline can be emotionally painful at the time but it produces the peace-giving fruit of being trained in Jesus' ways of right living.

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

Hebrews 12:11

- In prayer ministry we want to be careful to discern the difference between the godly sorrow (the kindness of God that leads to the sincere desire and commitment to change) versus the worldly sorrow (regret, shame and condemnation). We want to help a person experiencing godly sorrow, resisting any urge to rescue them or make them feel better but also protect them from the death of worldly sorrow.
- We can help a person recognize and respond to the working of repentance in their heart; following Jesus' simple, personal and practical leading (in spite of the deceit of the sinful nature. However, repentance and the heart surgery of God that is required is between the person and God.
- Although old ingrained patterns die hard – we agree with Jesus in His empowering grace to shake off the old pattern and embrace the new ways that Jesus leads us in. Once repentance is fully accomplished we will choose and follow Jesus' ways even when facing strong temptation.

Indicators of Repentance

- Receiving God’s conviction and embracing godly sorrow; agreeing with God in what He reveals as our wrong against Him and against who we have hurt.
- Seeking God’s forgiveness in our confession to Him – fully owning our wrong without denial, blame, excusing, justification or defending ourselves (*He knows everything already*).
- Receiving His forgiveness. *It is in our experiencing the kindness and patience of God towards us, and our worshipful response to Him that creates the motivation for change.*
- Looking to Jesus alone, to His grace and forgiveness, to bring us comfort and hope.
- Willingness to be known by trusted others, regardless of possible damage to our reputation or image, in our desperate need of God and the wrong of our sin.
- Giving a clean confession of our wrong, to those we have wronged; again without blame, excuses, justification or self-defence (except when to do so would create harm)
- Asking forgiveness of those we have wronged, to the extent that we can see the wrong, and willingly making restitution where possible to rebuild trust.
- Letting Jesus bring fuller conviction over time as needed; a willingness to understand, from the other person’s experience how our actions have harmed them and a willingness to have Jesus help us experience the pain we have caused them (not only our pain). *We may need to agree with God and seek His forgiveness again and then the forgiveness of those we have harmed where we see the self-centeredness and damage of our sin more fully over time.*
- Looking to God alone to change us, responding to His leading to reveal and heal what gave the sin power.
- A determination to do “whatever it takes” to abandon the sin and the situations that create vulnerability to sin regardless of how difficult or painful this may be.
- A demonstrated commitment to change and live according to Jesus’ ways of righteousness and love – opposite to the self-centered ways of sin.
- There are also specific things that would indicate repentance depending on the particular nature of the sin, for example someone who struggles with criticism and judgment could practice silence and speaking encouragement/affirmation.

Five Responses for Repentance

1. Agree – with the truth God reveals, without blame, defending or justifying.
2. Ask – for forgiveness from God and whoever we have wronged.
3. Acknowledge – our dependence on God’s kindness to create change in us
4. Act – obey and follow Jesus’ leading.
5. Again (and again) - persevere in obeying and following Jesus’ leading repeatedly, even when our sinful nature screams in protest.

NOTE: When a person is experiencing the genuine godly sorrow from conviction and the gift of repentance we want to affirm and bless this and not move into trying to make them feel better. We want to be sensitive to a person's drivenness or striving to please God where it is human effort and not affirm or complement this otherwise will just further entrench this orientation to perform. There is a significant distinction between godly sorrow versus condemnation, shame or self-pity.

When a person is experiencing the ongoing work of repentance we want to help prepare them for deeper surrender and dependence on Jesus which brings deep but often difficult change to entrenched patterns. Prepare them so they do not have false expectation that deep change will come easily but that Jesus' presence and grace will be with them and empower them for change.

Enrichment:

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:7, 8

1. Are our words in prayer for God's sake? No
God does not need us to fill Him in on the situation or instruct Him; "... *your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*" However, we do participate in God being glorified when we pray in agreement with another person, participating in what Jesus is doing, from worshipful surrender to Him.
2. Are our words in prayer for the sake of the person we are praying with? Yes
We invite them to bring their requests to God and join in speaking our agreement with them in what we see or sense Jesus is doing. In our submission to Jesus we discern God's will together and agree with Jesus, Father God and the Spirit. What we ask for is released by the power of God. Having agreed with God is His purposes it will be clearer for the person what their part is, in response to what God is doing.
3. Are our words in prayer for our sake? Yes
We are changed as we learn to follow Jesus in praying for others. We participate in His kindness and learn more deeply the goodness of His ways. As we know Him more fully we desire to be more like Him.

Prayer Ministry Training

Session Four

Review

Praying God-Powerful Prayers

4. Prayer in the power of; Jesus' Name

Praying from worshipful surrender to Jesus.

John 14:13, 14; John 15:7; Hebrews 5:7

5. Prayer in the power of; God's Will Prayed in Jesus' Name

Praying from our participation in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

1 John 5:14-15

6. Prayer in the power of; Agreement in God's Will Prayed in Jesus' name

Praying in agreement with Jesus and another person in what Jesus is doing from worshipful surrender to Him.

Matthew 18:19-20

We can only pray and see God's power released in what is consistent with God's heart, purposes and will.

Eight Step Ministry Model

17) **Step One:** Focus on Jesus

18) **Step Two:** Listening to Discern

19) **Step Three:** Prayers of Agreement and Confession

20) **Step Four:** Prayers of Forgiveness

21) **Step Five:** Prayers of Repentance

22) **Step Six:** Prayers of Deliverance

23) **Step Seven:** Prayers of Comfort and Blessing

24) **Step Eight:** Ending a Session/Next Steps

Step Six: Prayers of Deliverance
Understanding Demonic Oppression and Deliverance

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. Ephesians 6:12

We Live in Two Realms

- We live in two realms at the same time – the natural and the spiritual; the seen and the unseen.
- In the spiritual realm two powers battle one another relentlessly to rule over our life; to influence our thoughts, emotions, choices and actions in the natural realm.
- This battle is the advancing of God’s Kingdom against the remnant of Satan’s dark and oppressive rule. It is the advancing of light against darkness, truth against deceit and life against death.
- Who we submit to in the spirit realm, knowingly or unknowingly, determines who we allow to influence us in the natural realm; the Spirit of God or a deceiving spirit. We cannot escape this truth regardless of whether we understand it or accept it.
- In any particular circumstance or at any given time who we submit to determines who rules over us.
- Although our focus is usually on the crisis or distress in the natural realm we need to help people understand and focus on what is happening in the spirit-realm.
- As prayer ministers we want to live this way ourselves so we can invite other where we already are.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Colossians 3:1-3

- The sobering truth is that we can unknowingly subject ourselves to Satan’s rule if we do not intentionally submit ourselves to God. Jesus made it clear that we do not remain neutral in this conflict.

“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.” Luke 11:23

- The internal deceitfulness of our sinful nature can be manipulated by the external deception of a deceiving spirit (controlled by their leader Satan). Most people would not knowingly choose Satan to rule over them – but this is what happens by default.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

- In choosing Spirit life the internal influence of the Spirit empowers us to choose the power and rule of God over us in the spirit realm. Ephesians 6:12

This is our struggle; determining who will rule over us.

- Jesus has fully and decisively defeated Satan in the spirit realm. However, the working out of that defeat is still happening in the natural realm; here and now in us and through us.
- As prayer ministers we must intentionally respond to the Spirit, who shows us what God is doing in the spirit realm, so we can follow however He leads us in seeing that released in the natural realm.
- As prayer ministers we help others understand our true struggle and to choose Jesus.

Prayers of Deliverance

- There are varying degrees of demonic oppression or influence – it can be considered on a continuum from mild to severe, from distracting to disturbing. At its mildest, demonic oppression can be a momentary temptation, fleeting negative thought or surge of negative emotion that we can identify as contrary to the Spirit and resist by disregarding and reminding ourselves of the truth. However agreeing with a unclean thought, emotion or inclination gives power to the demonic.
- Other demonic oppression is more entrenched and even hidden requiring in-depth prayer.
- For entrenched oppression a key element is finding what gives the deceiving or unclean spirit(s) the right or access to oppress a person.
- Demonic access is gained through sin, there is an access point. This can be the sin of others against us, directly and indirectly, or through our own sin. Access points include trauma, sexual sin, occult involvement, generational sin, alcohol or drug use, especially hallucinogenic drugs. Gal. 5:19, 20
- Not every sin committed against us or every sin that we commit will cause demonic oppression.
- There are particular kinds or frequency of sin that give greater access to demonic oppression.
- Demonic oppression in a person's life can grow over time because of ongoing sin.
- The demonic will exploit any vulnerability in a person's life.
- In discovering access we need to explore however a person may have participated in or cooperated with a demonic spirit, knowing or unknowingly such as believing and acting out of a lie or looking to something contrary to God as a way to meet one's need (example, sex, anger, judgment, fear).
- This participation appears to have some benefit or met certain needs but always with a greater hidden cost. In prayer the person must completely renounce the participation and forsake any supposed benefit declaring that they will look only to Jesus to meet their needs.
- They need to be cautioned to remain consistent in this and not entertain any further contact when pressured by the spirit or when stressed or lonely or whatever else makes them vulnerable.
- If they are not willing to renounce and forsake fully then it is not time to pray for deliverance.
- Once Jesus reveals the access then the appropriate prayers are said to agree with the truth, confess the sin of participation and renounce any future involvement declaring Jesus alone as Saviour. In the name and authority of Jesus we command any deceiving spirit to be bound and removed.
- For spiritually sensitive people or for the person gifted with spiritual discernment it is also good for them to pray and surrender their sensitivity or discernment gifting to Jesus.

Demonization and Mental Illness

- A person reporting or exhibiting symptoms that could be demonic oppression should be asked, after they have had a chance to share some of their story, if there is any history (personal and family) of mental illness or a present possibility of mental illness. If they react strongly to this ask why.
- The demonic will exploit mental illness as they will exploit any vulnerability, and mental illness is often tangled together with demonic oppression – but they are distinct issues. For example if a person was schizophrenic they would need to be in the care of a psychiatrist because part of the issue is neurological and needs to be treated medically – or to be physically healed.

Eight Step Ministry Model
Step Six: Prayers of Deliverance
Strongholds

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

Stronghold's Are Deceptive Beliefs

- Deception originated with Satan; he is the father of lies. John 8:44
- A stronghold is something we hold to be true, a deceived belief that exalts itself above knowing God and knowing truth.
- Strongholds are not the deceived thoughts that briefly show up in our minds that we can recognize and disregard as a lie - a stronghold is a lie we are certain is true. Strongholds are not demons.
- However, any stronghold has a measure of demonic power as it comes out of Satan's foundational deception rooted in our sinful self-centered nature that we know better than God (We can be God).
- A deceiving spirit can keep the truth hidden and hold the lie in place increasing our sinful nature's resistant to truth. There can be a lesser demon spirit which influences a stronghold in an individual and family or a more powerful demonic spirit which influences a stronghold over a people group. These are called corporate strongholds. Ephesians 6:12
- Repeated deceived and negative thought patterns can also be caused or intensified by a brain chemical or hormonal imbalance requiring medical treatment.
- Strongholds can come from our culture and our sin as well as be inherited through generational sin, most through our experiences and how we come to understand those experiences.



- We form beliefs (what we hold to be true) through our experiences in life and then how we come to understand or make meaning of those experiences. Many of our beliefs are formed when we are young through our experiences with parents or other primary people.
- Real experience can lead us to a deceived belief. Our deceived beliefs can be very resistant to change, as they can be unconscious, self-reinforcing and change can feel very threatening. (See chart on the next page for example).
- **Where our beliefs about God are deceived then everything else we believe will also have some degree of deception (about ourselves, life, relationships, values, etc...)**

Experience and Understanding Leading To a True Belief

	A warm and available parent	A secure parent	A loving parent's discipline
Belief about who God is	God is available and affectionate.	God is able to act on my behalf.	God's love is unconditional.
Belief about myself	I am valued.	I am a delight and a joy.	I am loved even when I make mistakes.
Belief about my purpose in life	Purpose involves having meaningful relationships.	Purpose involves risk and discovery.	Purpose involves learning to receive and give love.
Belief about Relationship	Relationship is a gift freely given.	Relationship is safe and trustworthy.	Relationship is life-giving

Experience and Understanding Leading To a Deceived Belief

	An indifferent or busy parent	A needy, weak, or insecure parent	An angry parent's punishment
Belief about who God is	God is distant or too busy. He does not really care.	God may care but He is weak and unable to help me.	God is an angry and punishing God.
Belief about myself	I am not valued or important.	I am a burden.	I am bad or flawed.
Belief about my purpose in life	To earn my value	To meet the needs of others.	To avoid making others angry.
Belief about Relationship	Relationship must be earned	Relationship is a burden.	Relationship is destructive.

Exercise: Use the four types of prayers to write a prayer for deliverance from Strongholds

Step Three: Prayers of Agreement and Confession

Step Four: Prayers of Forgiveness

Step Five: Prayers of Repentance

Step Six: Prayers of Deliverance

Strongholds Prayer:

Step Three: Lord thank you for revealing the presence of this stronghold *name specifically*. I agree with You that it is blocking my thinking and keeping me from knowing your truth. Thank you for showing me how I have participated in this pattern of thinking and the behavior that comes out of this. I confess I have *describe participation*.

Step Four: I ask your forgiveness for the damage to myself and my relationship with you and others.

Step Five: I agree with the power of your Spirit to tear down the power of this lie and cleanse and renew my mind so that truth is established. Continue to teach me about who you are, who I am in you and what you have called me too. Lead me in the changed behavior of your ways that comes from my mind and thoughts and perceptions renewed by truth.

Step Six: In the name of Jesus I take authority over any demonic spirit that energized this lie and bind and remove that spirit.

Jesus, I surrender my life to you, the Way, the Life and the Truth.

Praying for Others

- When praying against demonic deception on behalf of others, our own humility and dependence on God, is our protection. We need to ask Jesus to show us what He is doing to destroy the lie and in its place exalt the truth from knowing Him. Then we can pray God-powerful prayers in His name.
- We ask Jesus to help us discern between the deception of the sinful nature and possible additional demonic deception that finds access through our sin nature to strengthen the deception.
- Repentance is the greatest weapon God gives us to tear down the deceit of our sinful nature and any demonic power that hides and strengthens that deceit, particularly with our own sin.
- Typically, when a person is open to Jesus we can help them in the steps of agreement, confession, forgiveness and repentance without first praying against demonic oppression. However, there are times, where a person seems blocked, resistant, distracted or sleepy, when we need to pray against demonic deception first (this may not be demonic). We may need to pray silently.
- **If we are praying against a stronghold that has a powerful demonic spirit over a belief or people group (corporate stronghold) we do not pray to bind this demonic spirit overall but pray on the individual's behalf to break the power of this corporate stronghold over them as a child of God.**
- Once a person can see their thought pattern as being deceived they agree with God in confession; asking His forgiveness, the forgiveness of others where words or behaviour have hurt them and forgiving others as needed.
- There is an ongoing need for us to have God's living word of truth, the Spirit of Truth, penetrate our hearts, separating truth from deception. We grow in our ability to discern truth.

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. Hebrews 4:12

- In order to have beliefs reflect truth and produce freedom we encourage the person to allow God to lead them in experiences of truth, following Jesus, particularly when this brings them into conflict with their deceived beliefs. The lie (stronghold) is torn down and the truth established as the person follows Jesus in living contrary to the deceived belief and acting consistent with the truth.

"If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you." John 8:31b, 32

- Often this is as simple as doing the opposite of what we used to do, regardless of our thoughts, emotions or circumstances.
- The process of transformation requires renewal of the minds – the lies exalted above knowing God being torn down and the truth which exalts God being raised up. Romans 12:2; Ephesians. 4:22-24
- Where a person is not open to seeing the deception in their thinking we can still pray against any demonic spirit that is blocking truth, taking authority over its influence and releasing God's light and truth to expose the stronghold and bring the person to repentance. We pray they would have a revelation of God's kindness and patience towards them. Romans 2:4

Recognizing Strongholds Worksheet	
These <u>patterns of thought</u> do affect our choices and behaviour (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:3)	
Patterns of thought doubting or denying God’s divine goodness or love for us.	
Patterns of thought doubting or denying God’s divine power or ability to save us.	
Patterns of fear, worry or anxiety in our thoughts (comes from the above).	
Patterns of trusting in ourselves first ; trusting our thoughts and plans.	
Patterns of depending on our intellect for understanding or to figure things out.	
Patterns of fantasy – may be romantic, sexual or otherwise – imagining our rescue.	
Patterns of thought contrary to love for others (God is love) see below	
Patterns of criticizing ourselves or others in our thoughts (may be a particular person)	
Patterns of judgement against others (our condemning opinion of them is God’s)	
Patterns of resentful thoughts against a person or situation.	
Patterns of anger, resentment or revenge which I “nurse” or rehearse my perception.	
Patterns of denying wrong in our thinking to make something acceptable.	
Patterns of rationalizing wrong in our thinking to make something acceptable.	
Patterns of minimizing wrong in our thinking to make something acceptable.	
Patterns of blaming others for the wrong that we do, attempt to avoid responsibility.	
Patterns of self-defensive thoughts – can be from real or imagined situations	
Patterns of confused thinking where we cannot get clarity	
Patterns of indecision in our thoughts (may be accompanied by anxiety)	
Patterns of victim mentality thinking – we are the victim in the unfairness of life	
Patterns of comparing myself or my situation to others (+ or -)	
Patterns of apathy or indifference	
Patterns of helplessness in my thoughts regarding my perception of powerlessness.	
Patterns of empty or vain imagination – useless thoughts that go nowhere (fantasy)	
Patterns of remorse or regret in thinking about past decisions or actions.	
Patterns of self- exaltation in my thoughts – hero.	
Patterns of discouragement, hopelessness or despair	
Patterns of complaining about life.	
Patterns of thought that seem to have a “life of their own”.	
Behaviour that Conflicts With What We Know to be Right (Romans 7:19)	
Addictive or destructive behaviours in the substances we consume; alcohol, coffee, sugar, tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, prescription drugs,	
Addictive or destructive behaviours in what we do or fail to do; excessive television or video games, workaholism, busyness, shopping, exercise, high risk sports and dangerous activities, accumulation of wealth or possessions, gambling and lotteries, internet/computer	
Addictive or destructive behaviours in relationships; control or manipulation, passivity, withdrawal and isolation, over responsibility or enabling another, anger and aggression.	

Eight Step Ministry Model

Step Seven: Prayers of Comfort and Blessing

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 receive from God. 2 Corinthians 1:3 - 5

- We comfort others from the comfort we ourselves have experienced and received from Jesus.
- If we have not faced the pain of our own wounding and sin and known God's presence and comfort then we cannot bring His comfort to others. We can only give away what we have been given.
- Comfort for those are experiencing godly sorrow over their sin and harm to themselves or others is bringing Jesus' invitation to exchange their wrong for His righteousness, coming under His rule of love, to live in forgiveness, repentance and freedom. The greatest comfort any follower of Jesus can experience is the assurance of God's forgiveness and the affirmation of His love.
- For the spiritually oppressed we discern with the person the access points in order to see the demonic bound and removed, the access points closed and God's comfort and protection released.
- For those who are oppressed and persecuted in the natural realm by another person, group or by circumstance, we help them practically find the refuge in Jesus from deeper surrender of our lives. We can pray for justice and lead them to God's enabling grace so they can forgive and bless.
- Comfort for those who suffer loss and grief is often our willingness to be with them in their pain without our needing them to be better. We pray simple but hopeful prayers that they would know the presence, comfort and leading of Jesus in making a way for them in the midst of grief. We can help them find appropriate counselling or support groups such as GriefShare or DivorceCare.
- Comfort for those who suffer from shame can come through helping them understand the difference between something I have done which is wrong (conviction of sin) versus feeling that I am wrong, unworthy, bad, dirty or unlovable (shame or condemnation). Shame is never of Jesus. Listen together to discover where the shame comes from and pray accordingly.
- People struggling with shame have difficulty with vulnerability with God. They fear He will affirm their belief that they are bad or dirty. It takes time for them to increasingly risk vulnerability with God, from which they will increasingly experience His love and grace. As they experience God we can invite them to take small steps, in practical ways, acting consistent with a person who is loved.
- For those who lack hope or are in despair, we want to be simply a safe and caring person. Too much talk, especially clichés or pat answers, does not help. Sometimes it is good to sit together silently.
- We can acknowledge that their emotions and perceptions feel true to them but at the same time not agree with what is contrary to truth. There may be a medical and mental health issue (such as depression) that requires referral to a physician.

The Power of God's Word

- Ask if they have or help them find a verse or scripture passage that addresses their need.
- Encourage them to simply repeat and declare those verses over themselves substituting their own name or their own situation into the verse or passage.
- You can use the verse or passage in praying for them and write the passage down for them. This powerfully helps people break lies and affirm the truth and hope that comes from Jesus the Living Word.

Practice: Prayer of Comfort and Blessing.

Each of these seven causes of personal difficulty or crisis (from Session Two) would need a different approach in bringing comfort and blessing.

H. Wounding and Brokenness From the Fallenness of this World

I. Wounding and Brokenness From the Wrong/Sin of Another Person

J. Our Own Wrong/Sin

K. Unmet Needs (Real or perceived – ours or someone we care about)

L. The Father's Discipline.

M. Faith Opportunity (to believe and stand in something God has spoken to us).

N. Demonic Oppression.

How would you pray for comfort and blessing for each of these differing difficulty or crisis?

Eight Step Ministry Model
Step Eight: Ending a Session

Knowing when and how to end a session

- Work at keeping your sessions within the scheduled time frame.
- In praying through an issue, persist until you see some significant progress or until you sense that this is as far as Jesus is leading you at this time.
- Keep an eye on the time and do not start something new if you do not have time to complete it.
- Seeing a natural conclusion in checking in with the person as to how they are as you pray through different things – you do not need to spend all of the scheduled time.
- As you get close to your time frame ending and conclude ministry you can move the session towards completion by summarizing what has been prayed into and giving encouragement and next steps.
- Help find appropriate Church and Community Resources. (Beulah Program Guide and The Support Network).
- We need to release people to God particularly when they are still struggling with pain, confusion despair or hopelessness - particularly in the rare situations when the ministry time does not bring them some relief or breakthrough.

Step Eight: Next Steps

Helping people to remain in and advance in wholeness and God's purposes.

STAGES OF TRANSFORMATION

Stage One We don't see how we look to our self-life in sinful self protective of our wounding and insecurity and how this hinders our relationship with God. We don't see the patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviour that separate us from God and others.

What We Need We need others to pray for us that we would be able to see our need to humble ourselves and more fully turn to God in our brokenness and sinful self-protection. We need to agree with the truth when convicted – without condemnation or blaming and defending.

Transition to Stage Two We are able with help to see our wounding more fully, the destructive self-protective patterns in our lives and how this affects us and those who are in relationship with us. Change may seem impossible.

What We Need We need to talk and pray with others we can trust, acknowledging our dependence on God to accomplish the change we cannot do on our own. We need to seek God and respond as He leads the simple, practical and personal ways of repentance.

Stage Two: The Most Difficult Stage We can feel frustrated and overwhelmed, and be tempted to give up because of the struggle between our sinful nature and the Spirit. We may struggle with disappointment and doubt as change seems to be taking too long.

What We Need In Stage Two We need to repeatedly embrace surrender to God, disciplining ourselves to run to God. We need to embrace the death of the sinful nature within us even when we cannot feel the life of Christ that is happening. We need to receive the full working of the gift of repentance/ including a Godly sorrow for our sin.

Transition to Stage Three We now can see when we are tempted by the old patterns, and understand the scheme against us to separate us from God. We can more consistently choose to avoid strongholds, bitter roots, places of false refuge, and pursue life. We experience increasing life in Christ and can see more and more of our identity in Him. We need to not grow weary and to keep pursuing God.

Stage Three God's ways in that area of our life have now become part of the nature of Christ in us and we can hold that ground even in the face of severe trial.

Self-Care
Burden Bearing

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Burden Bearing

- This session will help you understand if you are a burden bearer, help you do it the right way and also gives some understanding in how to pray for a wounded burden bearer.
- A natural burden bearer picks up on and will carry the burden of others, their emotional, physical or mental struggles from brokenness, grief, disappointment, anger, hopelessness, physical pain, oppression, or mental struggle.
- When a burden bearer does not make the distinction between what is their own struggle and what is someone else's it is like a radio picking up many stations which brings static rather than clarity.
- Burden bearing in the wrong way can be like a garbage truck that keeps piling on more and never gets rid of its load - pretty stinky and heavy! Just like the garbage truck needs to deposit its load at the dump, burden bearers need to bring the burdens of others to Jesus and not keep carrying them.
- Carrying burdens in our own strength will get too heavy and steal our joy. Those who are burden bearers will experience the overload of carrying the burdens of others in different ways. The symptoms of overload can range from barely noticeable to overwhelming. Burdens can be carried emotionally and show up as fear, anger and worry. Symptoms can also show up physically in headaches, backaches, stomach issues or even stress-related diseases. Others are affected mentally in struggling with anxiety, panic attacks, depression or other mental issues.

Praying For a Wounded Burden Bearer

- Those with a burden bearing gift may have unhealed wounding related to burden bearing, particularly because of their sensitivity and empathy. They will feel like it is their responsibility to carry the burdens of others or they would be irresponsible and uncaring – they can't let go. There is also the wounding that comes through the overload of burdens.
- The wounded burden bearer may spend much time and energy trying to get others fixed and healed or worrying about them. The wounded burden needs others to be well as they cannot have peace or joy while others suffer, particularly those they are closest to.
- Wounded burden bearers must let God show them why they become overloaded carrying the burdens of others, the wounding, reaction and wrong thinking that makes them overly responsible for others and/or not trusting that someone else powerful will care or help (not trusting God).
- Once burden bearing wrongly has been discerned – and the person you are praying for can see it and the cost it has, then lead them through ministry steps three to seven as needed.
- Burden bearers need to surrender their gifting to Jesus so He is in control of the gift and He can tune them in or out based on what He is doing.
- If this describes something you are struggling with it requires your attention or being involved in prayer ministry will be burdensome and not life-giving.

The Gift of Burden Bearing

- We first need to understand that burden bearing is a gift from the Lord.
- It begins in the heart of God when He sees a need and prompts another person to invite Him to act. Burden bearing helps the burden bearer to know how to pray as the gift of sensitivity can help them feel or sense the burden of the person they are praying for.
- Jesus invites the burden bearer to participate with Him through prayer as He draws the pain and struggle to Himself through them; lifting the burden off the person being prayed for so they can respond to His offer of rest, direction and healing.

“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

- Your interest or being drawn to care and pray for others may reflect you having the gift of burden-bearing, which often accompanies people who are particularly sensitive, compassionate and empathic.
- As we burden bear for others, and participate in Jesus ministry to them, we realize more fully the cost of His sacrifice for us all and grow in our gratitude and love for Him and hate of sin.

Burden Bearing Rightly

- Burden bearers need Jesus to tune them into what is their own struggle and what is someone else's. Each person, with Jesus, needs to work out their own burden and struggle but burden bearers also need Jesus to help them see and know what to do with the burdens that are not theirs.
- We leave the burdens of others with Jesus and entrust them into His care. We agree with Jesus in prayer with that He would take their grief, disappointment, anger, or hopelessness in exchange for His comfort, encouragement, healing and hope. A much better trade!
- There are times when a person who is a burden bearer and has been wounded will appear to be particularly insensitive or uncaring (which is not who they really are). This is because they have disconnected from their sensitivity as it was too painful. There may be a vow to not care or feel.

Self-Care for the Burden Bearer/Prayer Minister

1. Check your own state of being before you enter a session. How do you feel?
2. Pray for the covering and protection of God. (The armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18)
3. Rest in God – ministry is not about making sure we do everything right. Remember that we come prepared and do our best but it is God who is able to accomplish the good that He has purposed.
4. If you feel a burden during a session, then ask Jesus if it is yours (meant to be dealt with later) or if it is for the person receiving prayer. If it is for them, then pray it through either quietly or with that person as Lord leads or as leader directs. Pray that God will only show you what He wants you to know and that you will know what to do with what He shows you. He may show you something but the timing to explore it with the person is not right. Focus on Jesus - He is the Saviour not us.
5. If what you are praying for them is also an issue you are working in in your life then receive from Jesus for yourself what you pray for them.
6. When the ministry session concludes pray a prayer of cleansing (see below).
7. As you leave the session check yourself. How do you feel now?
8. If a burden persists then ask God if He is asking you to carry it and how much longer. If it gets stuck, then ask someone to pray with you, since it may have attached to an unhealed hurt in your own life.

Burden Bearing Exercise:

Praying to give our burden bearing gift to Jesus and give Him permission to lift from us anything we are carrying that is not ours to carry.

Cleansing Prayer Example:

Lord I ask you to cleanse my body, soul and spirit from any burdens I may have picked up and I ask you to wash and cleanse me by the power of your word. Any residual burdens I give to you and ask that you complete the work you have started. Amen

ENRICHMENT

Can A Christian be Demonically Oppressed?

- Some Christians object to the idea that a Christian can be demon possessed because in receiving Jesus as our Lord and Saviour we then belong to God and could not be under demonic control. However, the term “demon possession” is not a literal translation from Greek or Hebrew text. The word most commonly translated as demon possessed literally means to "be demonized" or "be bothered by a demon." (Mark 1:32, Luke 8:36). In teaching basic understanding and practice regarding deliverance, we are not talking about “demon possession” but instead are referring to being set free from varying degrees of demonic oppression or being bothered by a demon.
- There are numerous scripture verses that warn followers of Jesus to not allow Satan, or deceiving spirits, to influence them; getting a foothold through anger (Ephesians 4:26, 27) deceiving them into following false doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1), taking them captive through their participation foolish arguments that create quarrels (2 Timothy 2:25) or manipulating them through greed to lie to and grieve God’s Spirit (Acts 5:3).
- The apostle Peter encouraged follower of Jesus to; *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* 1 Peter 5:8
The concept of demonic possession, as being under the control of demonic spirits is biblical but rare (as seen with the Gadarene demoniac).