

A Cleansing Guide

A Guide for Personal Confession and Repentance

If our prayers and witness are to have life-changing power, God's saints must be deeply cleansed and filled with God's Spirit (Psalm 66:18; Acts 1:8). To draw near to God, I urge every believer and church to embrace the following journey of cleansing and empowerment (James 4:8). As we embrace times of cleansing, let us remember three key truths. (1) We are fully accepted in Christ's blood and righteousness. Let us keep our eyes on God's grace and not be defeated by condemnation. God convicts to transform, not condemn His children. (2) Do not just confess sins, also work on forsaking them! (Proverbs 28:13) (3) Believe Christ to live through you. Ask Him to daily fill you with His powerful presence. As you incorporate deeper cleansing, you can now trust God to cleanse and empower your heart for prayer and witness.

Seven Areas for Cleansing and Victory

1. **Pure Thoughts** – *“For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”* (Proverbs 23:7a). *“Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Fully confess and forsake whatever sins God brings to mind. Trust God to fill and empower you with His Spirit. After each of the following questions, pause and allow God to speak. (a) Do I have any pattern of unclean or lustful thoughts? (b) Do I think far more about worldly things than spiritual? (c) Am I often guilty of angry thoughts? (d) Do I frequently entertain thoughts of doubt instead of trust? (e) Am I often filled with thoughts of bitterness and unforgiveness? Believe Christ to live through you by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:11). Put off sinful thoughts and put on Christ by faith.

2. **Godly Attitudes** – *“Let this mind (attitude) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5).

Fully confess and forsake any areas God brings to mind. Trust God to fill and empower you by His Spirit. After each of the following questions, pause to listen for God's impressions. (a) Am I lukewarm about spiritual things? (b) Am I in any way proud or condescending toward others? (c) Is there anyone about whom I think jealous, envious thoughts? (d) Do I have an attitude of doubt and unbelief? (e) Do I have any tendency toward being harsh or critical? Believe Christ to live through you by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:11). Put off wrong attitudes and let the mind of Christ dwell in you.

3. **Holy Speech** – *“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment”* (Matt. 12:36). *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers . . . Neither filthiness nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks”* (Ephesians 4:29; 5:4). *“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Fully confess and forsake any sins of speech. Trust God to fill and empower you by His Spirit. After each of the following questions, pause and allow God to speak. (a) Have I uttered any inappropriate or slang speech? (b) Do I have patterns of cursing or off-color words? (c) Am I prone to exaggeration or lying? (d) Do I have patterns of complaining and griping? (e) Am I guilty of any form of divisive speech? (f) Do I have any patterns of critical, judgmental speech? (g) Have I said things

when alone that would cause great shame if made public? (Yet remember, all will be revealed.) Believe Christ to live through you by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:11). Put off all ungodly speech and yield your tongue to Christ's Lordship.

4. **Right Relationships** – *“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift . . . For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”* (Matthew 5:23-24; 6:14- 15).

Fully confess and forsake all relationship sins. Take your time and be thorough! After each of the following questions, pause and allow God to speak. (a) Is there anyone I have offended but have not asked forgiveness? (b) Have I failed to seek full reconciliation and make restitution to anyone I have offended or harmed? (c) Do I harbor the slightest unforgiveness and anger toward anyone? (d) As a father, am I leading my family spiritually? (e) As a mother, am I sacrificially and joyfully serving my family? (f) Have I in any way failed to honor, respect or show attention to my parents? (g) Have I spoken negatively about anyone behind their back? (h) Am I involved in any form of gossip or negative, critical speech? (i) Is there any pattern of failing to respect and support my spiritual leaders? Put off sins of relationship and let Jesus be the Lord of all.

5. **Rejecting Sins of Commission** – *“For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me”* (Psalms 51:3).

Fully confess and forsake all sins of commission. After each of the following questions, pause for God to speak. (a) Am I engaged in any form of sexual immorality? (b) Have I compromised by viewing anything unclean via movies, TV or Internet? (c) Do I have habits that abuse or neglect my body? (d) Do I commit idolatry by placing anyone or anything over loving and serving God? (e) Have I dabbled in any form of gambling or new ageism? (f) Am I doing anything for which I do not have perfect peace? (g) Am I in any way harsh or unkind to others? (h) Have I abused God's grace by taking sin lightly? (i) Do I confess sins but fail to forsake them? Put off disobedience and put on full surrender to Christ.

6. **Renouncing Sins of Omission** – *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* (James 4:17).

Fully confess and forsake any patterns of omission. After each of the following questions, pause and listen for God's impressions. (a) Am I failing to abide in Jesus by neglecting regular time in His word and prayer? (b) Do I neglect to be a daily witness and fail to generously support evangelism and missions? (c) Have I neglected to discern and use my spiritual gifts? (d) Am I allowing any point of spiritual bondage to remain in my life? (e) Have I failed to support and respect my spiritual leaders? (f) Am I failing to daily pursue holiness? (g) Am I robbing God by failing to tithe and give generous offerings beyond the tithe? (h) Have I neglected to work at improving my marriage and family life? (i) Do I fail to pray with my family? Believe Christ to live through you by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:11). Put off sins of neglect and put on full obedience.

7. **Embracing Full Surrender and Obedience to Jesus** – *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me”* (Matthew 16:24).

Fully confess and forsake whatever God reveals. After each of the following questions, pause for God to speak. (a) Have you willfully failed to surrender every part of your life to God's total control? (b) Has God told you to do something yet you still haven't obeyed Him? (c) Is there some area where you pretend not to know what God is saying, yet deep down you know you do? (d) Are there things God has told you to stop; yet you still do them? (e) Is there any area of service you should be doing; yet you are not? (f) Have you continued to sin willfully in areas about which God has clearly spoken? Believe Christ to live through you by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:11). Put off self-will and wholly surrender to Christ's Lordship.

Drawing Near to God in Full Confidence
"Claim the Fullness of God's Spirit"

Once you have thoroughly confessed your sins and yielded to Christ's full Lordship, He promises to draw near and fill you with Himself. *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you"* (James 4:8). With cleansed hearts and fervent prayer you can indeed stand firm in God's wonderful promise of mercy and prayer. Though we are all imperfect, His grace is greater than our weakness. *"If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). In these crucial days of destiny, may God find believers cleansed, yielded and praying for America (2 Chronicles 7:14). Remember, it is the prayers of clean hearts that avail much! (Psalms 24:3; 66:18; James 5:16)

After the step of consistent cleaning, there is yet one other step that releases God's incredible power for breakthrough. This second step involves the awesome power of united prayers of agreement (Matthew 18:19; Acts 2:1; 4:31-32). A united prayer blitz has enormous breakthrough power for individuals, churches and families. Prayerfully consider "Step Two for Greater Power."

Step Two for Greater Power
"Embrace a Prayer Blitz of United Agreement"
(Matthew 18:19; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; James 5:16)

One of the most powerful principles for spiritual breakthrough is the dynamic of united prayer. Tragically, this awesome power is often neglected by individuals and couples. Yet there is good news in the fact united prayer is easy to embrace. A process I call the "united prayer blitz" combines several principles in one dynamic process.

The following process is a powerful path to spiritual breakthrough. I have seen some of the most miraculous breakthroughs in couples who embraced a prayer blitz of united agreement. In many cases, they had tried everything else and their situations seemed hopeless. God has made incredible promises about the power of intensified prayer, fasting and united agreement (Jeremiah 29:12-13; Matthew 17:20-21; 18:19; James 5:16).

A Practical Process for Prayer Blitz Breakthroughs

- 1) The couple agrees to dedicate a certain period of time to give special focus to praying for needed breakthroughs. The specified period can be a few days, a period of weeks or as long as they feel God's leading. The key principle is to let God guide and not to view this as a program.
- 2) It is vitally important to embrace *thorough* spiritual cleansing at the beginning (and throughout) the special period of prayer focus. We must not underestimate the importance of praying with cleansed hearts. In many ways, deep spiritual cleansing is the single biggest factor in dynamic, faith-filled praying.
- 3) Couples may agree to utilize fasting. One method is to miss the noon meal and give that time to prayer. Spirit-led fasting is often a powerful tool for increasing the impact of prayer (Matthew 17:20-21). While it should never be viewed as legalism to "earn" God's favor, it is a point of obedience. Jesus didn't say "if you fast," He said, "when" (Matthew 6:16).
- 4) Many couples ask others to join them in praying for their specific need during the specified time of focus. A practical approach is to ask them to take a moment to pray for your need at certain times of the day (i.e. breakfast, lunch, bedtime, etc.). It is important to prayerfully consider who you ask to join you in the united prayer blitz. You want people who will keep their commitment and whose prayers have power. Your prayer blitz will only be as powerful as the prayers and faithfulness of those who are in it!
- 5) It is especially powerful when couples make a commitment to meet periodically for corporate prayer with their partners. Regular meetings also add the element of accountability. The meetings can be weekly or as often as agreed. There is enormous power in such united agreement! (Matthew 18:19; Acts 2:1, etc.) Jonathan Edwards called it "explicit agreement" and "visible union" in "extraordinary prayer."
- 6) As the prayer blitz proceeds, be sensitive to any promise or insight God reveals to guide your praying. Praying God's revealed promises brings vastly increased power and faith into our intercession. We should also seek God's wisdom in identifying and tearing down specific strongholds in those for whom we are praying (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).
- 7) Don't give up! Persistence is an often neglected principle in breakthrough praying (Luke 18:1-9; Luke 11:5-8). Great victories often require significant time and great fervency. It is also the nature of spiritual battle to sometimes see things get worse before they get better. Let us ever keep our eyes on Jesus, not our problems (Hebrews 12:2).