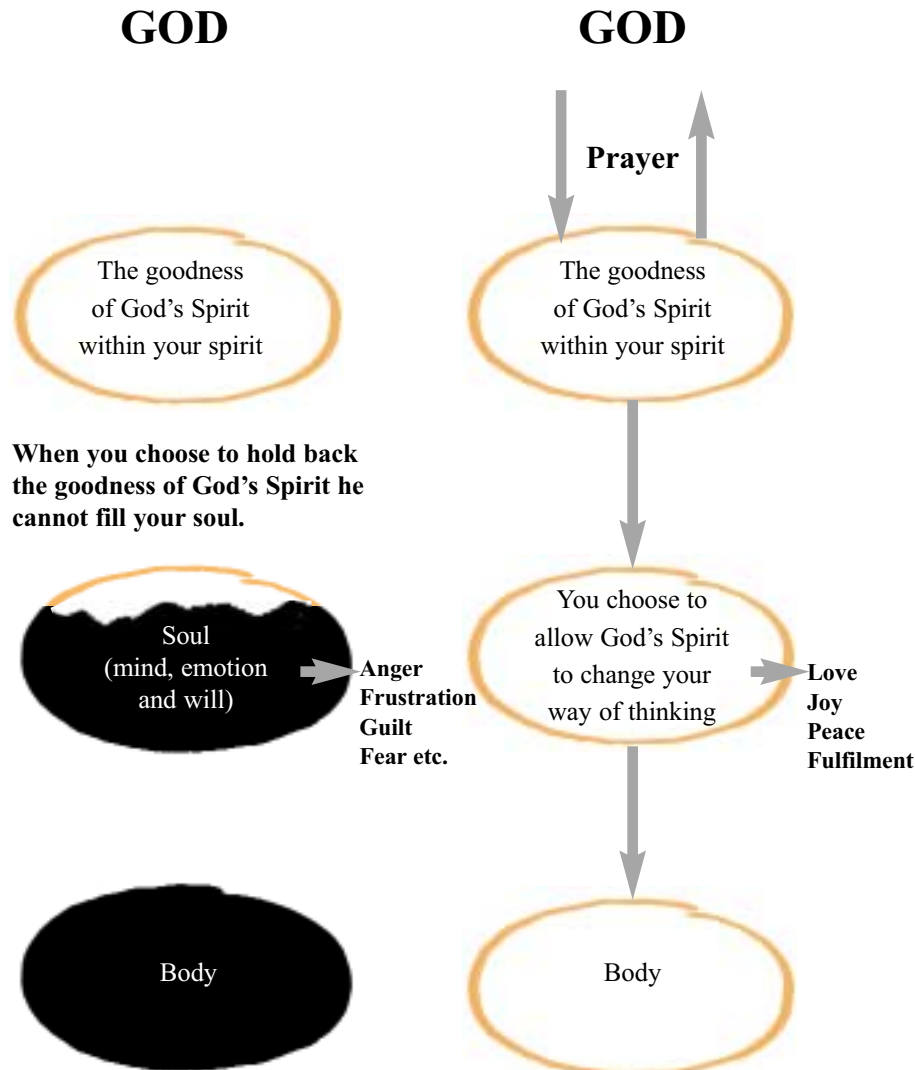


Your choice can hold back God's goodness



DON'T GET ROBBED!

This section outlines the types of things that can rob you of the many blessings God has for you.

The Bible says you **cannot receive** what God has for you **when you allow** your human nature to lead you instead of the Holy Spirit.

Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants.
Romans 8:5 GNB

It is as if there is a door between your soul and spirit. If you open the door, you choose to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in your daily activities. Every day the Holy Spirit wants you to choose to have your mind, emotions and will guided by his goodness.

Paul, a follower of Jesus, encourages you to:

Be filled with the Spirit.
Ephesians 5:18

The exact meaning of this Bible verse is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, which is only possible when you choose to do what the Holy Spirit tells you to do every day.

The Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to those who obey him.
Acts 5:32b GNB

Jesus asked his followers:

Why do you call me "Lord" when you won't obey me? But all those who come and listen and obey me are like a man who builds a house on a strong foundation laid upon the underlying rock. When floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm, for it is strongly built.

Luke 6:46-48 TLB

When you make Jesus your Lord, you are choosing to have him as number one in every area of your life. You make Jesus Lord by giving up your will and choosing to do his will. It is as if he sits in the driver's seat and guides you in the direction that he knows is best for you.

"I know what I am planning for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you, I will give you hope and a good future."
Jeremiah 29:11

When you choose to follow your own will and emotions you are being robbed of God's blessings. You have stopped the Holy Spirit from being able to help you.



The Bible explains how people, even God's children, will act when they choose to be guided by their own desires:

When you follow your own wrong inclinations your lives will produce these evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, spiritism (that is encouraging the activity of demons), hatred and fighting, jealousy and anger, constant effort to get the best for yourself, complaints and criticisms, the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group - there will be wrong doctrine, envy, murder, drunkenness, wild parties, and all that sort of thing.

Galatians 5:19-22a TLB

When you choose to follow your human nature the most obvious things that will rob you of the good things God has for you are: unbelief, fear, unforgiveness, lustful thoughts, sexual sins and using spiritual powers other than God's.

I. Not believing God's word

When we doubt the promises God has given us in the Bible, we are getting robbed of the good things he has for us.

The person who trusts in the LORD will be blessed.
Jeremiah 17:7

Do you doubt any of these things?

- That you are God's child
- That your sins are forgiven
- That God loves you
- That God will do what he has promised

To stop doubting, we need to have faith. Faith is to trust and have confidence in the mercy, love, faithfulness and wisdom of God that he will do what he has promised, even when things are difficult.

What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.

Hebrews 11:1 TLB



Follow these simple steps.



Faith comes when you hear and receive God's Word.

That is why it is important to read the Bible every day and go over key verses regularly to strengthen your faith so you have the confidence to act on God's promises.

*Faith comes from **hearing**, and hearing by the word of God.*

Romans 10:17 KJV



Faith is developed through your relationship and love for God.

*In Christ Jesus...**faith** activated and energized and expressed and working **through love**.*

Galatians 5:6 Amp



Ask God to help you believe.

Father God, I ask that you will forgive me for not believing your Word. I want to know and love you more and more each day. Help me to believe in your promises, to accept them and act on them.



Act on God's promise to you as if it is definitely going to happen.

*My brothers and sisters, if people **say** they have faith, **but do nothing**, their faith is worth nothing.*

James 2:14

Here are some examples of God's promises from the Bible that will strengthen your faith.

a. Have you doubted that you are a child of God?

*To all who **received** him, to those who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to **become** children of God.*

John 1:12 NIV



Ryan deals with doubt

Ryan knew that it was real when he received Jesus' forgiveness and life. He believed the Bible when it said Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for his sins. However, he began to doubt a few months later when the feelings of excitement from his new spiritual freedom had worn off. To overcome his doubt Ryan read verses from the Bible that reminded him that he was still a child of God.

*I tell you the truth, whoever **hears** what I say and **believes** in the One who sent me has eternal life. That person will not be judged guilty but has already left death and entered life.*

John 5:24

b. Have you doubted that your sins are forgiven?

God hates the act of sinning because sin blocks the Holy Spirit from flowing through you, but he continues to love you - his child - regardless of what you have done wrong. He never sees you as you see yourself. He sees you as his precious child being changed to be like him (2 Corinthians 3:16-18).

Learning to walk with the Holy Spirit is like a little child physically learning to walk. When the child falls the parents do not get angry with him. Instead they pick the child up in love and encourage him to try again. In response to the parents' love the child will desire to please the parents and seek to get it right next time.

Lord, you are kind and forgiving and have great love for those who call to you.

Psalms 86:5

Jesus longs to see you enjoy all that he has for you. He does not condemn you when you give in to temptation, but lovingly reaches out in forgiveness when you repent of your sin.

God honors his Word because he said:

If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all wrong we have done.

1 John 1:9

c. Have you ever doubted God's love for you?

Have you ever thought, "God doesn't love me"? Sometimes we find it hard to accept God's love as pure and unconditional. We often relate God's love to our past experiences with those who said they loved us, but later hurt us. Humans are not perfect, so it is likely that despite their best efforts to show love, at some stage you will have been let down, disappointed or hurt. God's love will never let you down or disappoint you.

The Bible says that nothing can separate you from God's love. Look up these verses in your Bible to see just how amazing God's love is: Romans chapter 8 verses 38 and 39.

d. Have you doubted that God will do what He has promised?

You may have doubted God will use his power to give you good things because you think he only does it for others, or you do not feel worthy to receive from him.

God loves his children equally so we can count on him to fulfil his promises to each of us, as we have faith in him.

*Jesus answered, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'Go fall into the sea.' And if you have no doubts in your mind and believe that what you say will happen, **God will do it for you.** So I tell you to believe that you have received the things you ask for in prayer, and God will give them to you."*

Mark 11:22 -24

2. Fear

Fear will stop you receiving all God has for you. Several times in the Bible you are encouraged not to fear. Here is an example from the book of Isaiah.

*I am the Lord your God, who holds your right hand, and tells you, "**Don't be afraid.** I will help you".*

Isaiah 41:13



Do you know someone like Sarah?

Sarah worried about many things. She worried whether the traffic would be heavy and make her late for work, or whether she would be able to make the sale or if the boss would be unhappy with her work, or if she would even find the right man to marry. And so the list went on.

To stop being afraid, follow these steps:



Understand that God's power and love are greater than your fear.

God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

2 Timothy 1:7



Read verses in the Bible that talk about fear.

Here are some examples of the promises in God's Word to help you when you are afraid.

👉 **When you are afraid of people.**

God has promised to always help you.

*God has said, "I will never, never fail you nor forsake you." That is why we can say without any doubt or fear, "**The Lord is my Helper and I am not afraid of anything that mere man can do to me.**"*

Hebrews 13:5b-6 TLB

👉 **When you are afraid of failing.**

Here is God's promise to you when you depend on him:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't depend on your own understanding. Remember the Lord in all you do, and **he will give you success.***

Proverbs 3:5-6

Personalize this verse and speak it out loud every day.

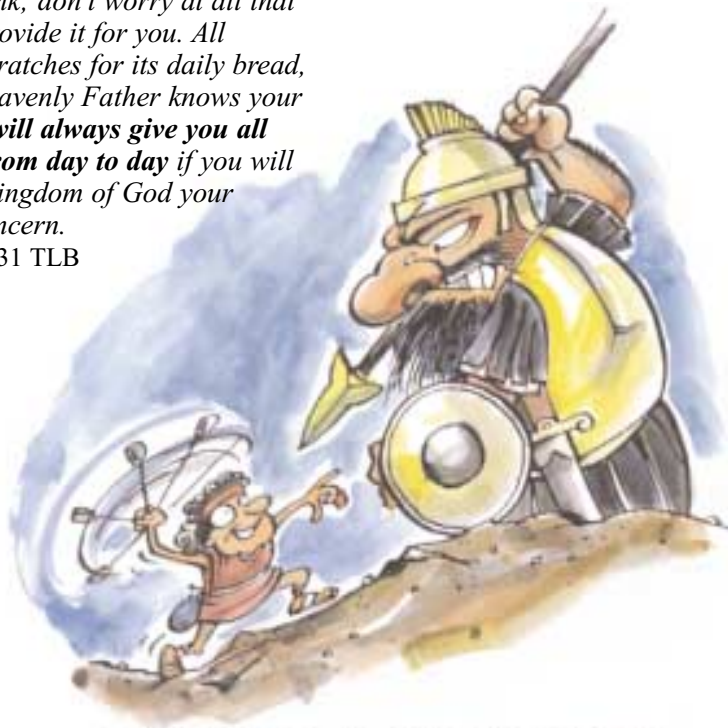
I trust in you, Lord Jesus with all my heart and I will not depend on my own understanding. Instead I will remember you in all that I do today, and you will give me success.

🔗 When you are afraid your needs will not be met.

The Bible says God will care for you:

*Don't worry about food – what you eat and drink; don't worry at all that God will provide it for you. All mankind scratches for its daily bread, but your heavenly Father knows your needs. **He will always give you all you need from day to day** if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.*

Luke 12:29-31 TLB



FAITH IS THE ENEMY OF FEAR

🔗 When you are afraid something bad will happen.

God has promised to protect you when you trust him to keep you from harm.

Those who go to God Most High for safety will be protected by the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God and I trust you." Nothing bad will happen to you; no disaster will come to your home. He has put his angels in charge of you to watch over you wherever you go.

Psalm 91:1-2,10-11



Pray.

Ask God to take away your fear and replace it with his peace. King David asked God to help him when he was afraid.

*I **asked** the Lord for help, and he answered me. He saved me from **all** that I feared.*

Psalm 34:4

*Do not worry about anything, but pray and **ask** God for everything you need, always giving thanks. And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

Lord Jesus, today I am feeling afraid about . . . (tell him your fear). I give this to you and ask that you give me your peace. Please take control of the situation and I will trust you to look after me.

3. Not forgiving others

When you choose not to forgive those who have hurt you, bitterness, resentment and anger will build up inside you. This allows the devil to rob you of your peace and joy.

*If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry – get over it quickly; **for when you are angry you give a mighty foothold to the devil.** Instead, be kind to each other; tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God has forgiven you.*

Ephesians 4: 26, 32 TLB

Can you think of someone who hurt you so badly that you have found it really hard to let go of the grudge?



It does not matter how long ago the hurtful event occurred, how wrong they are or how many times they hurt you. The Bible says you must forgive them so God can bless you.



Tracey learns to forgive

Tracey's first husband beat her every time he got drunk. After four years of abuse she left him and got divorced.

On a weekend the children were staying with their father, he crashed the car and killed their eldest daughter. Tracey's bitterness turned to hate!

Tracey felt continually depressed. A friend told Tracey that the hatred and bitterness from the past was robbing her of happiness. Tracey needed Jesus to help her forgive. When Tracey experienced Jesus' forgiveness she found it easier to forgive her divorced husband.

Steps of obedience:

Follow these steps below to put a stop to the pain and frustration you have been feeling inside.



Choose to forgive.

Do not use the excuse that you are waiting until you feel like forgiving – it will probably never happen. Remember your soul is naturally proud and it only hurts you if you continue to let your emotions rule your life. **Forgiveness is a choice.** It is like when someone 'owes' you, but **you choose** to cancel the debt (Matthew 18:24-43).

Forgiving is not just a choice, it is a command from God.

*When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, **forgive him** so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.*

Mark 11:25



Release the one who has hurt you.

If you really forgive someone, you no longer blame that person, even though they may be guilty of that sin.

If you do not blame a person, you cannot resent them.

If you do not resent them you cannot hold any bitterness in your heart.

If you do not hold bitterness then you do not get all emotionally tied up with anger and hate towards that person.

If you do not hate then the devil cannot keep you emotionally bound!

Jesus said:

Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:37

The literal translation of this Bible verse is 'release and you will be released'.



Bless the one who has hurt you.

Do not do wrong to repay a wrong, and do not insult to repay an insult. But repay with a blessing, because you yourselves were called to do this so that you might receive a blessing.

1 Peter 3:9

To bless someone, start by speaking good things about him or her. It is one of the hardest things to do, but it works! Many have found it helpful to pray this prayer out loud.

Heavenly Father you are kind and forgiving, and you always love me. Help me to love others with the same love that you have shown me.

I take responsibility for disobeying you by holding a grudge and not forgiving others as you have forgiven me. Please forgive me.

Help me to obey you by forgiving those who have hurt me. I choose now to forgive the wrong and hurt that has been done to me. I forgive (name individuals, including yourself if necessary) for (list the things they did to you) and I no longer blame them for doing this to me. Release me from any resentment, bitterness, anger or hate I have held inside.

Father, as you have promised in your Word, please heal my wounded heart. I choose now to show mercy to those who have offended me and ask that you will bless (name individuals) in all that they do.

Psalm 86:5, Romans 5:5, 2 Corinthians 10:5,

Psalm 147:3, Luke 6:27, 1 Peter 3:9

4. Indulging in lustful thoughts and sexual sins

How easy it is to let your mind wander with sexual fantasies when you see things on TV, magazines, billboards and the internet. In this section we deal with lustful thoughts because they often lead to sexually desiring someone outside marriage.

*Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God; for all these worldly things, these evil desires – **the craze for sex**, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance – these are not from God.*

1 John 2:15-17 TLB

The more you think about something, the more likely you are to act on it.



Jesus said:

All these evil things begin inside people, in the mind: evil thoughts, sexual sins, adultery...

Mark 7:21

The Bible says sexual sin is having sex when you are not married, or when either you or your partner are married to someone else, or perverse sexual behavior.

Run away from sexual sin. *Every other sin people do is outside their bodies, but those who sin sexually sin against their bodies. You should know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. So you do not belong to yourselves, because you were bought by God for a price. So honor God with your bodies.*

1 Corinthians 6:18-20



Steve becomes addicted

Steve in his early childhood would hide under his parents' bed to escape their fighting. Under his dad's side he found pornographic magazines. When he looked at the magazines Steve found that he could escape the harshness of reality. As he grew older Steve bought his own pornographic magazines, calendars, videos and downloaded screen savers onto his computer. He would tell his friends, "I'm not hurting anyone. I'm just appreciating the natural beauty of the female body." Steve became addicted to lustful thoughts. He could not stop going back to these pictures until he asked God to help.

*God is good! So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. Don't be like the people of this world, but **let God change the way you think**. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him.*

Romans 12:1-2 CEV

Steps of obedience:

Use the steps of repentance below to change your lustful thought patterns and to break the soul ties with previous partners. Remember what the life-changing web presentation said: real repentance includes admitting your sins, being sincerely sorry that you have done wrong and choosing not to do it again. In addition to this, we must cut off any connection with the sin or bad habit and ask the Holy Spirit for help as you put into action your choice not to sin again.



Pray.

Use this prayer when you have lustful thoughts.

Lord Jesus, I confess that having sexual fantasies, lustful and perverse thoughts are sin. Forgive me for allowing my mind to dwell on these things. In your name, Jesus, I break the addiction of these wrong thoughts.

Fill my mind with your Holy Spirit and help me focus on what is pure and lovely so I can please you in all I do.

Use this prayer if you have had sex outside marriage.

Father, I acknowledge that sex outside marriage is sin. Please forgive me for having sex with _____ . It says in your Word that when I have sex with someone, we become one. In Jesus name, I cut myself free from emotional ties and break down the mental images that have kept me connected to _____ .

Fill my mind with your Holy Spirit and help me focus on what is pure and lovely so I can do your will. Thank you for keeping me from being tempted and protecting me from evil.

1 Corinthians 6:16



Stay away from and destroy things that tempt you.

Stay away from the things, people or places that tempt you to have lustful thoughts or sin sexually. Throw out or destroy any pictures and magazines that are likely to cause you to sin. Do not go to the places that are likely to tempt you to have lustful thoughts. For the Bible says:

Stay away from everything that is evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

How can a young person live a pure life? By obeying your word.

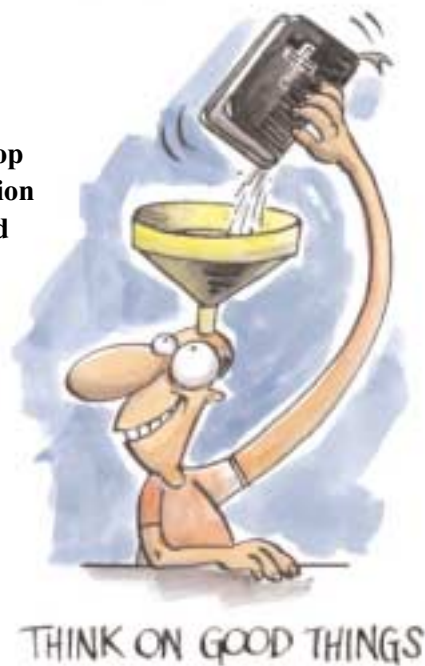
Psalm 119:9



Change your thought patterns to focus on what is pure and good.

Choose to depend on the Holy Spirit to help you stop thinking wrong thoughts and break sinful habits. You will discover real victory when you allow the Holy Spirit to change the way you think.

Every time you get an impure thought the Bible tells you to stop and choose to change the direction of your thought by praising God and focusing on his goodness.



Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for.
Philippians 4:8 TLB

When you choose not to depend on the Holy Spirit and try to do it in your own strength, you are likely to repeat the mistake next time you are tempted, because your strength is limited – God’s strength is limitless and all-powerful.

5. Using other spiritual powers

Have you ever tried using your own or other spiritual powers – even if you thought it was harmless – just for fun or because curiosity got the better of you? This can include:

- ☞ tarot card reading
- ☞ clairvoyance
- ☞ runes
- ☞ astrology
- ☞ star signs
- ☞ consulting a medium
- ☞ occult games
- ☞ vampirism
- ☞ talking to the dead
- ☞ astral travel

Do you have a spirit guide, magic charm, New Age or occult tattoos, music that speaks of witchcraft, spells, death or murder?

In the Bible God gives very strong words of advice about using other spiritual powers.

Don't let anyone use magic or witchcraft, or try to explain the meaning of signs. Don't let anyone try to control others with magic, and don't let them be mediums or try to talk with the spirits of dead people.
Deuteronomy 18:10-11

Anyone doing these things is an object of horror and disgust to the Lord.
Deuteronomy 18:12 TLB

Do not be fooled by those who use spells or rituals to do ‘good works’ or ‘bring balance to the earth’ or ‘get justice’. These people may be genuinely trying to do ‘good things’ to help society, but their spiritual forces are not from God.

The Bible says you are not to use anything other than God's spiritual powers. You are to cut off the evil power you have knowingly, or perhaps unknowingly, given place to in your life. Any compromise means you will struggle to hear God clearly speak to you or you may feel confused.

If you hide your sins, you will not succeed. If you confess and reject them, you will receive mercy.

Proverbs 28:13



Susan discovered the truth

Susan 'felt right' about attending New Age personal growth courses, rebirthing and reiki. The courses incorporated many basic concepts of Christianity. She was taught to trust God as head of all consciousness and to follow Jesus' example as a good master and teacher. She was encouraged to pray for the sick by channeling energy through her hands, and to receive words of knowledge and prophecy by clearing her mind in meditation.

Susan's life changed when she accepted Jesus' forgiveness and asked him to come into her spirit. She no longer saw Jesus as just another master, but God, the Creator of the universe, revealing himself in human form. She no longer served a counterfeit, an 'angel of light', but dedicated herself totally to the Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God. She no longer needed to obtain merit by doing charity, hoping to return in 'another life' with 'more enlightenment'. She had forgiveness and eternal life as a gift. Instead of living in deception she began a relationship with the one who is truth, Jesus Christ.

Steps of obedience:

Here is the way to put aside your past involvement with any spiritual powers from Satan's empire.



Choose to turn your back on anything that would prevent God taking first place in your life.

You can do this by writing down on a separate piece of paper any time and place you can remember being involved in, or using, any spiritual powers other than God's. Go through the list on page 57 to get you started and then ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of any other things that have not been listed.



Pray.

Thank you Jesus that you overcame all the powers of darkness when you died on the cross.

Forgive me for relying on and using spiritual powers other than yours.

In your name, Jesus, I renounce every curse spoken over me and what is written on this piece of paper. I now turn my back on it all and claim you, Jesus, as my master and Lord.

Colossians 2:15



After you have prayed, destroy anything associated with witchcraft or these situations.

Burn the piece of paper from step one as a final act of cutting yourself free from the curses that have linked you with the deception of the devil (Acts 19:19).

You have come to the end of this section. By now you should have a fair idea about some of the things that can block the Holy Spirit being part of your life. Doubt, fear, unforgiveness, lustful thoughts, sexual sins and using any spiritual power other than God's can rob you of his best blessings. Continue to work on these areas as your spiritual relationship with God grows. While you are doing that, share with someone else how they can get started on their new destiny. The next section will show you powerful resources God has given to help you do that!