



**CLEARING
THE WAY**

FOR THE

HOLY SPIRIT

Clearing the Way For the Holy Spirit

God has promised to give the Holy Spirit in order to transform our lives, prepare us for Jesus' soon return, and take the gospel to the entire world. Through God's power we are to make more room for the Holy Spirit by repenting from our sins. This handout is intended to help do this. Each section has Bible texts and questions that can be studied personally or in a small group. Each section also has a specific list of sins for you to examine and see where you can more deeply turn from sin towards a closer relationship with God. Please pray the following prayer and ask God to reveal Jesus to you in a deeper way. This will give you the inspiration and the courage to see your own sin in a more significant way. Check the things that apply to you and seek God's forgiveness and victory for each.

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting”
(Psalm 139:23-24)***

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer” (Ellen White, Selected Messages, Volume 1, 121).

This study guide was created by Scott Griswold while working with the Center for East Asian Religions and Traditions. Some of the inspiration came from *Acts of the Apostles* by Ellen White and from Caring for the Heart Ministries.

Clearing the Way #1—The Gift of Repentance

The Holy Spirit is the answer to every problem any person faces. Unfortunately, the world is ignoring that Spirit and walking down a path that leads to suffering, death, and total separation from the great God who loves them. Many people who call themselves Christians are also stuck in their sins and experiencing little of the Holy Spirit. Jesus came to call people back to a relationship with God and a life of purity and joy. He said, “Repent!” Repentance means to turn around, away from sin and towards God.

- A) Read Luke 15:11-32. What does this story tell you about God’s heart?
- B) What can you learn from the prodigal son’s actions and words about true repentance?
- C) Read 1 John 1:8-2:1. What does God say we should do about our sins?
- D) Read Psalm 51:1-3, 10, 17. What did David ask for in his prayer of repentance?
- E) Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. What does true repentance do?
- F) Read Acts 5:31. Repentance means to be so truly sorry for our sins that we turn from them to a new life. Sometimes we don’t have that feeling. How can we have such a deep repentance?
- G) Psalm 139:23-24. Write down the phrases of this prayer to help you as you seek God for deeper repentance and confession of your sins.

Confession and repentance needs to be specific, admitting to God wrong actions, words, and attitudes that you have had or still have. God will help you admit your need for God’s help and to turn from these sins to His higher and better way.

Repentance: Now write down or speak to God about anything the Holy Spirit brings to your mind for which you need to confess and repent.

Pray a prayer something like this:

Dear Holy and Compassionate Father,

I have looked at Jesus and seen the One who is perfectly pure in thoughts, words, and actions. I have seen Your deep love for me through Jesus’ dying on the cross for my sins. Now I know the ugliness of my sin more clearly. I am truly sorry for the following sin: _____ (say one specific sin that God brings to your mind). I know it hurt You, other people, and myself. I choose to repent, turning away from this sin. Please forgive me. Make my heart clean and new. Come inside my heart. I turn from this sin and ask You to give me the opposite quality: _____

Thank You in the name of Jesus who died on the cross because of my sins. Amen.

Clearing the Way #2—Total Devotion Versus Idolatry

- A) Read Mark 10:17-22. Why do you think Jesus asked the rich young ruler to give up everything to follow Jesus?
- B) Read Matthew 4:1-11. What are some of the things Jesus refused to do because of His love and devotion to God?
- C) Read Exodus 20:3-6. God has told us not to have any other gods or idols. What are some of the gods and idols that people have?
- D) Read Luke 14:25-33. What are some of the things that can keep us from following Jesus?
- E) Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-14. What warnings and what promises does God give you in these texts?

Repentance: Since God is the only true God who deserves my worship and love, I confess the times I have put other things before Him. Forgive me for coveting what others have. After loving God first, He has also told me to love others as myself and has especially entrusted my family to my care. I confess and turn from the ways I have neglected them through my own desires. In specific:

At certain times I have made the following things more important than my relationship with God, my relationship with my family, or helping those in need:

- _____ My work and career
- _____ Position and honor
- _____ Worshipping idols, any other gods or spiritual powers
- _____ Money or Possessions
- _____ My entertainment: TV/computer/sports/hobbies/video games/other
- _____ My education and learning
- _____ Family or friends
- _____ Work or worldly pleasure on God's Sabbath,
- _____ Unhealthy practices that hurt my body and affect my relationship with God and people

In general I want to acknowledge and turn from the times I have

- _____ Neglected to do the good I know God has commanded me to do
- _____ Failing to become actively involved in helping to finish God's work

I Choose Instead:

_____ By God's power I choose to love God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength (Mark 12:30). I will put Him first in my time, my thoughts, my affections, and my loyalty.

Clearing the Way #3—Humility Versus Pride

- A) Read Luke 18:9-14. Describe the differences between these two men.
- B) What does God not like pride and boasting?
- C) Why do you think God was pleased with the tax collector's humility?
- D) Read Proverbs 13:18. What are the results of pride and what are the results of humility?
- E) Read Mark 14:27-31. Why do you think Peter denied Jesus when he was so sure he wouldn't?
- F) How are we like Peter?
- G) Read Philippians 2:5-8. Jesus had more reason to boast than anyone else. What are some ways that Jesus showed humility instead?
- H) Read James 4:6-10. What counsel does God give here to help us overcome pride?

Repentance: In view of God's greatness and Jesus example of humility, I confess and turn from my pride, specifically in the following areas:

- _____ Speaking and thinking often about what I have accomplished
 - _____ Critical of others, looking down on others
 - _____ Focused on outward appearance such as my home, car, clothes, possessions, educational degrees, jewelry, investments, etc.
 - _____ Relying on my efforts more than on God
 - _____ More motivated by what others think about me than by what God thinks
 - _____ Defensive or dejected when blamed, criticized, or corrected
 - _____ Difficulty admitting faults and mistakes, or asking for forgiveness
 - _____ Expecting others to recognize and appreciate me instead of seeking to honor God and help others
 - _____ Other ways I am proud instead of humbly realizing everything I have comes from God and that I am a sinner saved by God's grace: _____
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I Choose Instead:

_____ I turn my eyes away from my successes and pride to focus on Jesus' humility. I turn away from my despair and inadequacies to glorify God for His great power. I choose to "let this mind be in me which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). I submit to God's counsel and humble myself in the sight of the Lord, knowing that He will lift me up (James 4:7, 10).

Clearing the Way #4—Obedience Versus Rebellion

- A) Read Ephesians 6:1-3. How does God want us to relate to our parents?

- B) Read Romans 13:1-7. In what ways does God expect us to relate to the other authorities in our lives?

- C) Read 1 Samuel 24:1-22. In what ways did David show respect to King Saul?

- D) 1 Samuel 15:22-23. King Saul lost his leadership role because of disobedience and disrespect. Why do you think God compares rebellion to witchcraft and idolatry?

- E) Read Isaiah 50:4-6. This is a prophecy about Jesus. In what ways did Jesus live out this beautiful example of obedience?

- F) Ezekiel 36:25-27. How can we joyfully obey God instead of having a disobedient and hard heart towards Him and the authorities in our lives?

Repentance: God, who is the only Source of my life and my salvation, has given me authorities to protect, guide, and help me learn how to honor, trust, and obey Him. As I think about Jesus' total dedication to obedience, I confess that I have not always respected and submitted to my authorities as He did. I have resented correction and reacted to being told what to do. I have rejected instruction and wise counsel, choosing to do what I wanted to do instead.

In specific, I want to confess to God and turn away from the rebellion I have had against any of the following:

Father: _____
Mother: _____
Government: _____
School/Church Leaders: _____
Husband/Wife: _____
Employers: _____
God: _____
Others: _____

I Choose Instead:

_____ I choose to submit myself to obey God in every area of my life. By His power I will also submit to my earthly authorities in anything that does not go against God's commands. If necessary, I will humbly bring my requests to my authorities, asking them to reconsider their stance. I will trust God to work out my problems for His glory and my ultimate good.

Clearing the Way #5—Forgiveness Versus Bitterness

- A) Read Luke 9:51-56. Compare what Jesus was going to Jerusalem to do with what James and John wanted to do to the Samaritans. When a person chooses bitterness and revenge, who all gets hurt?

- B) Read Luke 23:33-34. Jesus forgave those hurt Him. What are some of the many terrible things that were done to Jesus before the cross and while He was on the cross?

- C) Read Matthew 18:21-35. What does this parable teach you about the importance of forgiving others?

- D) Read Ephesians 4:31-32. What does God specifically command?

- E) Read Romans 5:5. How can we have the kind of love necessary to forgive those who have hurt us?

Repentance: Because God has forgiven my sins and carried my pain, I choose to confess and turn from bitterness and anger, choosing to forgive those who've hurt me. I am sorry for the times I have spoken in anger, gossiped, ignored someone with silence, or acted hurtfully.

In specific, I am asking you to search my heart for unforgiveness in relation to my spouse, parents, children, extended family, friends, teachers, classmates, employer, employees, church members, and leaders. I even confess that sometimes I have been disappointed and angry with You. I am writing down here and on the back of the paper or speaking out to You exactly who I feel has wronged me.

Person	Action/Attitudes That Hurt Me	Feelings I Have
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I Choose Instead:

Father in Heaven, I choose to forgive _____ (person) for _____ (actions and attitudes). I am willing to suffer the emotional pain _____ (feeling), as well as the consequences that their actions and attitudes caused. I surrender all these things to You, so You can transform them and use them for good. I choose to pass on the mercy & kindness You have given to me as soon as I have opportunity. Forgive me for allowing wrong feelings, attitudes, and actions into my life.

_____ I receive the Spirit of Jesus who died on the cross for their sins and mine into my heart. Fill me with Your thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and ways. Thank You for making all this possible through Jesus' death, shed blood and victorious resurrection. Amen.

Clearing the Way #6—Purity Versus Sexual Immorality

- A) Read Genesis 39:1-12. What do you admire about Joseph in this story?
- B) Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-20. What kinds of problems can be caused by sexual sins?
- C) Read Matthew 5:27-30. What did Jesus include as sexual sins?
- D) Read John 14:30. Describe the purity of Jesus.
- E) Read Ephesians 5:25-28. Those Jesus never got married, this text describes Him as husband to the church. Describe the quality of Jesus' love and devotion.
- F) Read Psalm 51:1-2, 7-10. David wrote this Psalm after committing a terrible sexual sin and murder. What does this Psalm teach that God can do for those who have fallen into similar sins?

Repentance: Because God requires a pure heart and desires to bless me with true, faithful love, I confess and turn from the times that I have been sexually impure. In specific:

- _____ Adultery, any sexual activity outside of marriage
- _____ Premarital Sex
- _____ Homosexuality
- _____ Lust
- _____ General desire for someone other than my spouse
- _____ Wearing revealing clothes that attract attention to my body
- _____ Pornography (internet, movies, magazines, books)
- _____ Any other sexual sin: _____

I also recognize that there are many other temptations to impure thoughts in a general way and so I confess:

- _____ Watching, reading, or listening to anything that is not “true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy”
(Philippians 4:8)

I Choose Instead:

_____ I receive a clean, pure heart from God and a faithful spirit. I will focus my mind on pure and loving thoughts. I will keep sexual pleasure only for marriage. I will live to bless others instead of pleasing myself.

Clearing the Way #7—Self-Control Versus Intemperance

Self-control means refusing that which is harmful and using what is good with moderation.

- A) Read Daniel 1:3-8, 17-20. In what ways did God bless Daniel for taking a stand regarding certain things he would not eat or drink?

- B) Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Why should a Christian be especially careful regarding what he puts in his body?

- C) Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-10. Why should those who are waiting for Jesus to come be especially committed to practicing self-control and avoiding drunkenness?

- D) Read Matthew 4:1-4. What area was Jesus severely tempted about? How did He overcome?

- E) Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13. What were some of the failures of the Israelites in the area of self-control?

- F) What has God promised to do for us when we're tempted?

Repentance: I have often selfishly enjoyed eating, drinking and doing what felt good even when it hurt my body and my service to God.

I choose to confess to God and turn from these areas of intemperance and lack of self-control in which I have fallen:

- _____ Drinking alcohol
- _____ Smoking cigarettes or using tobacco or beetle nut, etc.
- _____ Using illegal drugs
- _____ Misusing prescription drugs or other medicines
- _____ Overeating
- _____ Eating or drinking anything that harms my health, decreases my energy, and negatively affects my relationship with God or my service to others.
- _____ Other unhealthy practices

I Choose Instead:

_____ By God's mighty power, I choose to receive the healthiest types of food and drink into my body. I will speak and act after thinking about what Jesus would do in the same situation. I will use my energy, body, and mind to love God and serve people.

Clearing the Way #8—Integrity Versus Deception

- A) Read John 12:1-8. Describe Judas' character. What were his sins?

- B) Read Revelation 21:27 and 22:12-15. How serious is the sin of lying?

- C) Read Matthew 23:25-28. Why do you think lying and hypocrisy are so offensive to Jesus?

- D) Why do people like to have friends and business partners who have the qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, and integrity?

- E) Read John 18:19-23; 18:37-38. In what ways did Jesus live a fully honest life of integrity?

- F) Read Hebrews 8:10-12. What does God promise to do to take away our problems of lying and hypocrisy?

Repentance: Because God sees all things, including my heart, and because I want the joy of complete honesty and integrity, I confess and turn from all hypocrisy, specifically the following areas which I have done:

- _____ Doing good deeds so people will notice and praise me
- _____ Lying or deceiving so people won't see my weaknesses or sins
- _____ Saying something while thinking something different in my heart
- _____ Pretending to be spiritual while neglecting Bible study and prayer
- _____ Pretending to be a follower of Jesus while secretly continuing in sin
- _____ Looking good at church but living wrongly in my home
- _____ Hurting someone's reputation in order to make me look good

I Choose Instead:

_____ I ask God to cleanse my heart of all deception and falseness and write His law of love upon my heart and mind. In faith that He has changed me on the inside, I step out to do what is right on the outside, trusting that by His power I can be genuine and honest. By God's power, I will be a person of integrity, doing what is right, when I am alone, with my family, and in public. I will speak the truth in love.

Clearing the Way #9— Freedom in Christ Versus Evil Spirit's Control

- A) Read Mark 5:1-5. What are some of the possible consequences of connecting to evil spirits?
- B) Read Mark 5:6-20. What can Jesus do for those who are under the power of evil spirits?
- C) Read Deuteronomy 18:10-14. What kind of things does the Bible say a person should never be involved with?
- D) Many times people think that they can get power, healing, and other help from evil spirits. It often appears this is true. Read John 8:44. What did Jesus say about the devil?
- E) Read Revelation 12:10-11. Satan was overcome by Jesus, but how can we also overcome Him?
- F) Read Ephesians 6:10-18. This text promises many things to help you overcome the attack of evil and evil spirits. Which ones do you find especially meaningful?

Repentance: Because God alone can give lasting protection and salvation, I choose to trust Him only. Because Satan and his evil spirits are deceivers and destroyers, I confess and turn from any connection with them. In specific I confess and turn from the following things that I have at some time been involved with and thus opened a door in my life to evil spirits:

- _____ Offering incense, money, food, etc. to spirits, angels, ancestors, or gods
 - _____ Trying to know the future through fortune-tellers, horoscopes, etc.
 - _____ Seeking blessings or healing through powers outside of God
 - _____ Using amulets, tattoos, martial arts or any other form of protection involved with spirits
 - _____ Placing a curse or spell on someone
 - _____ Meditation which empties the mind or seeks to contact spirits
 - _____ Playing games that have to do with spirits, magic or seeking powers
 - _____ Listening to a spirit speak through a medium or a séance
 - _____ Watching movies or reading stories related to spirits, ghosts, magic, etc.
 - _____ Any other connections with evil spirits: _____
- (See Bible lists: Deuteronomy 4:19; 18:10-12; Leviticus 20:6, 27; Revelation 21:8)

I Choose Instead:

_____ I ask Jesus to fill my heart with His presence through the Holy Spirit. Knowing that Jesus has overcome all evil spirits, I will rely on His power for anything I need and trust Him even if He doesn't do everything like I ask Him to. I put on His armor and fight in His strength (Ephesians 6:10-18).

**Clearing the Way #11—
God's Blessings Versus Generational Sins**

- A) Read Jeremiah 16:10-13. Whose sins caused the children of Israel to be cast out of their land?

- B) Think about the lives of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and his twelve sons. What sins were passed on from generation to generation? (For specifics look at Genesis 20 and 26:1-11, 25:28 and 37:3).

- C) Read Leviticus 26:39-45. What does God want us to do about the sins that come to us from our parents and ancestors?

- D) Read Hebrews 2:14-18. Why did Jesus take a body like ours? (As you have time read Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17 to see what He also inherited)>

- E) Read 2 Corinthians 6:18-7:1. What does God promise to do for us?

Because I want to be like my Father in Heaven, I choose to confess and turn from any sins that I have allowed into my life through my ancestors and others. Though I appreciate my parents and grandparents, I know that at times and in certain ways I have followed in their mistakes. I choose to admit my sinful likeness to them and humbly accept the warning from their lives. I am now asking Jesus to save me from doing the wrong things that they did.

In specific:

- _____ From my paternal grandfather: _____
- _____ From my paternal grandmother: _____
- _____ From my maternal grandfather: _____
- _____ From my maternal grandmother: _____
- _____ From my father: _____
- _____ From my mother: _____
- _____ From my society and culture: _____
- _____ From anyone else: _____

I Choose Instead:

_____ I choose my Father in Heaven to be my example in everything. I receive His inheritance and blessing through Jesus making my adoption into God's family possible. I receive my Elder Brother Jesus as my Savior and Lord so that His character might be in my heart and expressed through everything I say and do. I also give thanks for every good thing that my parents and ancestors have passed on to me.

Clearing the Way #12—Steps for Overcoming Sin

A. Be Prepared—The best preparation is a close relationship with Jesus (1 John 4:4)

1. Every day, ask for and receive a new heart and the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26,27).
2. Know God's will and surrender your desires to it (James 4:7).
3. Make a clear and firm resolve. (1 Peter 5:8-9).
4. Focus on the character qualities of Jesus that you are lacking (2 Corinthians 3:18).
5. Remind yourself of the destructive nature of the sins you fall into, even "little" sins (Romans 6:23).
6. Fill your mind with Bible promises that match your need and that will increase your faith (2 Peter 1:3-4).
7. Focus on God's amazing love and power, not on your failures (Jude 24).
8. Picture yourself as victorious in the very situations where you usually fail (Colossians 3:1-4; memorize Romans 6:1-23 and 8:1-17).
9. Remove all possible temptations (Romans 13:14 KJV).
10. Ask friends to pray for you and hold you accountable and asking you how about what's happening (James 5:16).

B. Resist Temptation in the Moment by Faith in Christ's Strength (Ephesians 6:16,17)

1. Respond quickly to the Holy Spirit who will remind you what's wrong and right (John 16:8; Isaiah 30:21).
2. Call out to God for help. Say, "I can't overcome, but You can" (Psalm 70:5).
3. Claim Bible promises with a "Thanks!" (Ephesians 6:16,17)
4. Don't be discouraged by wrong thoughts. Remember temptation is not sin (James 1:14,15). Just don't dwell on them. Reject wrong thoughts as the tempter's voice and believe you are a new person with good thoughts and desires through Christ).
5. Take a step of right action, trusting the power will come (Philippians 2:12-13).

C. Reflect on Your Experience and Learn from It

At the end of every day, look at your successes and failures to see what you can learn so you can improve for the next day (Proverbs 4:18).

Short Summary for Action—Write the Following on a Card to Keep with You:

1. Through God's power, I will not _____ (the sin).
2. I claim God's promise: _____

_____ (text that matches your need).
3. Instead I will _____ (opposite good thing you will do).

The Disciples and the Holy Spirit Cleared the Way

“As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning. Truths which had passed from their memory were again brought to their minds, and these they repeated to one another. They reproached themselves for their misapprehension of the Saviour. Like a procession, scene after scene of His wonderful life passed before them. As they meditated upon His pure, holy life they felt that no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ’s character. Oh, if they could but have the past three years to live over, they thought, how differently they would act! If they could only see the Master again, how earnestly they would strive to show Him how deeply they loved Him, and how sincerely they sorrowed for having ever grieved Him by a word or an act of unbelief! But they were comforted by the thought that they were forgiven. And they determined that, so far as possible, they would atone for their unbelief by bravely confessing Him before the world.

The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this they realized what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them.

These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised.

During the patriarchal age the influence of the Holy Spirit had often been revealed in a marked manner, but never in its fullness. Now, in obedience to the word of the Saviour, the disciples offered their supplications for this gift, and in heaven Christ added His intercession. He claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it upon His people.

“And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.”

The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit’s grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, “Herein is love.” They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day” (Acts of the Apostles 36-38).