

Steps to Freedom in Christ By Neil T. Anderson

1. The first step toward experiencing your freedom in Christ is to renounce (verbally reject) all past or present involvement with occult practices, cult teachings and rituals, and non-Christian religions. You must renounce any activity or group which denies Jesus Christ or offers guidance through any source other than the absolute authority of the Bible. Any group that requires dark or secret initiations, ceremonies, promises or pacts should also be renounced (1John 4:1-3).

2. God's Word is true, and we need to accept His truth in the innermost part of our being (Psalm 51:6). Whether or not we feel it is true, we need to believe it is true! Jesus is the truth; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; the Word of God is truth; and we are admonished to speak the truth in love (John 14:6; Eph. 4:15).

3. We need to forgive others so Satan cannot take advantage of us (2 Cor. 2:10-11). We are commanded to get rid of all bitterness in our lives and forgive others as we have been forgiven (Eph. 4:31-32).

4. We live in a rebellious age. Many people only obey laws and authorities when it is convenient for them. There is a general lack of respect for those in government, and Christians are often as guilty as the rest of society in fostering a critical, rebellious spirit. Certainly, we are not expected to agree with leaders' policies that are in violation of the Scripture, but we are to "honor all [people]; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

5. Pride kills. It says, "I don't need God's or anyone else's help. I can handle it by myself." Oh, no, you can't! We absolutely need God, and we necessarily need each other. The Apostle Paul wisely wrote, "[we] worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and *put no confidence in the flesh*" (Phil. 3:3). That is a good definition of humility: putting no confidence in the flesh, that is in ourselves; but, rather, being "*strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might*" (Eph.6:10). Humility is confidence properly placed in God.

6. Many times we feel trapped in a vicious cycle of "sin-confess-sin-confess" that never seems to end. We can become very discouraged and end up just giving in to the sins of our flesh. To find freedom we must follow James 4:7: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." We submit to God by confession of sin and repentance (turning away from sin). We resist the devil by rejecting his lies. Instead, put on the full armor of God and walk in the truth (Eph. 6:10-20). Sin that has become a habit often requires help from a trusted brother or sister in Christ. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Sometimes the assurance of 1 John 1:9 is enough; "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

7. The final step to freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors as well as any satanic assignments directed toward you or your ministry (Ex. 20:4-6). The iniquities of one generation can adversely affect future generations unless the sins of the ancestors are confessed and renounced, and your spiritual heritage in Christ is claimed. You are not guilty for the sin of your ancestors, but because of their sin, you may be predisposed to certain strengths or weaknesses and influenced by the physical and spiritual atmosphere in which you were raised. These conditions can contribute to causing someone to struggle with a particular sin. Ask the Lord to show you specifically what sins are characteristic of your family.

