

“Calling Upon Jesus in Our Urgent Need!”

Week 2 - 100 Days of Prayer

April 3 - 9, 2020

“What if We Looked at Sin Like We Look at COVID-19?”

By Eric Louw

A couple of weeks ago, my wife and I both ended up with what we thought was food poisoning and a fever. Thankfully, after 36 hours of fighting a fever, I recovered. My wife's fever, however, didn't go away. She developed a dry cough and body aches.

After a few days, we contacted the Spectrum Health COVID-19 screening number and set up an appointment for their next screening opening. We shared her symptoms and were told that, while she had all the major matching symptoms, unless she had knowingly been in contact with a diagnosed carrier of COVID-19, she would not be eligible for any test. Coming in for testing would be a waste of time.

A few days later my wife, still struggling with a fever, awoke coughing up thick phlegm. This triggered her gag reflex so severely that she began coughing and throwing up and couldn't stop for about two hours. We took her to the emergency room and shared all of the above with the physicians. They got her on an IV and administered medications, which helped get things under control.

I again asked about the possibility of testing my wife for COVID-19, given the fact that she works with a lot of internationals and we had also recently been out of state attending a large conference. The doctor shared that even though my wife had the symptoms, testing requires contact with a diagnosed carrier of COVID-19. As the doctors shared this with us, I realized that there was either a major shortage of tests, or the medical professionals were waiting for community spread to reach a threshold before taking the diagnosis seriously.

After more discussion, the doctor finally told us that my wife would get tested for everything else first. If those results came back negative, a second swab would be immediately forwarded to the local health department for testing on COVID-19, and we should hear back within a couple of days. In the meantime, we were instructed to return home and self-quarantine, which we did.

When the initial test for everything else came back NEGATIVE that first day, I let each group of people I had been in contact with know our circumstances to maximize caution. This resulted in many people being quarantined.

Not wanting to inconvenience others too much, I decided to contact the hospital to check whether my wife's swab had been forwarded for COVID-19 testing. The staff there did not know where it was sent. I called one place after another with no helpful information. It

took days before I finally connected with the County Epidemiologist only to discover that they hadn't been planning to send the swab in for testing at all. When I explained the circumstances further and how many people were quarantined and waiting for the results, he said they would get the swab tested for COVID-19 by Tuesday.

Tuesday came and went. No results. Wednesday came and went. No results. Meanwhile my wife ended up back in the emergency room as she could not stop coughing. Thursday came and mostly went. No results. Upon inquiry, we found out that there was a backlog of hundreds of samples pending, probably with similar stories to our own. Finally Thursday at 7:30 pm, almost 12 days out from initial quarantine, the results came back. NEGATIVE! What a relief, but what an ordeal!

In many ways, our experience reminds us of the very first "virus" to infect this world. Like COVID-19, sin didn't appear deadly when it was first discovered in heaven. Sin didn't even appear that deadly when it arrived on earth, "quarantined" at a single tree. But as sin began to spread from the serpent to Eve to Adam and their descendants, it quickly grew into something that was entirely out of control.

Unfortunately, in contrast to the world's response to COVID-19, most of us aren't too concerned about the spread of sin. We aren't too worried about testing our lives by God's Word and searching our hearts. We see the symptoms – selfishness, anger, pride – seeping into everything we do. But we ignore those symptoms. We enjoy sin, we play with it, we joke about it, anything but trying to purge it from our lives at all cost.

What if we did things differently? What if we treated sin as if it was COVID-19?

Psalm 139:23-24 encourages us to submit ourselves to a diagnostic test. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." God is longing for us to know our true condition and seek spiritual healing. His heart yearns for us to be cleansed and purified. We are all under quarantine here on earth, but one day soon this quarantine will end and Jesus will come to take us home. When He does, will we be ready?

Eric Louw is a pastor with the Texas conference, currently finishing his MDiv at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He and his wife, Esther, have been married three years and are excitedly anticipating the arrival of their first child in September!

HEART QUESTIONS: Are we willing to give God permission to search our hearts and cleanse us from the deadly virus of sin? What if that means asking forgiveness from someone whom our sins have wounded?

ACTIVE HEART CHALLENGE: This week, as we continue to pray for our physical protection and healing, let's actively pray for our spiritual healing. And let's take steps to reach out to those around us—to ask forgiveness, to seek reconciliation, to share God's love! Let's not minimize sin (big or small) any longer, but ask God to help us run from it with all our might. As we pray, let's claim 1 John 1:9 and Isaiah 1:18.

"Many who would shrink with horror from some great transgression are led to look upon sin in little matters as of trifling consequence. But these little sins eat out the life of godliness in the soul." *The Faith I Live By*, p. 92

Going Deeper - Additional Reading Suggestions for this week:

- Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, chapters 2-3
- "Removing the Spiritual Breaches" – See attached PDF from www.revivalandreformation.org



Day 8 – Prayer Focus – Friday, April 3, 2020

- Pray for the countries and regions that have been heavily affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, with deaths and heavy strain on public and community health systems.
- Pray for endurance and strength for medical professionals. If you know a medical professional, let them know you are praying for them by name.
- Pray for God's grace for those in your local church dealing with the multiple changes taking place in daily life. Pray for those in your local church who have been affected—that they can cope and, beyond that, be faithful witnesses to God's all-powerful leading in their lives.
- Pray that church members can find practical ways to encourage one another in the faith, and especially encourage those who are going through quarantine and isolation alone.
- Pray for those in the Northeastern Mindanao Mission in the Philippines who are struggling with lack of food and other necessities during this COVID-9 pandemic. Pray that their faith would be strengthened.



Day 9 – Prayer Focus - Sabbath, April 4, 2020

To Display His Glory

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.” Rom. 13:8

“The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.” *Acts of Apostles*, p. 9

Heart Questions:

It appears according to Romans 13:8 that we are in debt to love others as God has loved us. How can we demonstrate that love even in difficult situations, especially when we have been wronged by others? How can we be God's agency to display His glory?

- Pray that we as a Seventh-day Adventist church would fulfill our mission as God's appointed agency for the salvation of men.
- Pray for some of our members in Kenya. Pray for forgiveness and healing among church members, and unity and wisdom how to move forward in this COVID-19 crisis. Pray also for the Holy Spirit to be upon the church leadership throughout Kenya .
- Pray for our church members and leaders in Burundi, Africa, who continue to be oppressed. Pray that the love of God would be displayed through the witness of those in Burundi, and through the testimony of church members all around the world, who shine for Jesus even in the midst of great turmoil and suffering.
- Pray for a continued emphasis on new forms of evangelism that reach out to people through the internet and other ways, complying with "social distancing" but maintaining our strong emphasis on Christ, His Word, His righteousness, His sanctuary service, and His saving power in the great controversy.
- Pray that we would know how to practically share the Three Angels' Messages, along with God's health message, as these messages are so relevant for this time in Earth's history.



Day 10 – Prayer Focus - Sunday, April 5, 2020

Hidden in His Tabernacle

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.” Ps. 27:5

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493

Heart Questions:

What does it mean to be hidden in the secret of His tabernacle? Why do we as Christians have so little spiritual strength? What are two actions that God is waiting to see in us? How can we practice these two actions right now during our present crisis?

- Pray for church members in the country of Fiji who are seeking to be a light even in the midst of a world in chaos. Pray that they would be pillars of hope and anchors of stability in these difficult times, reflecting the love of Jesus with all they meet.
- Pray for the local Hope station in Fiji to become a trusted media platform throughout the island and that God will use it to reach many for God's kingdom.

- Pray for the Student Missionaries around the world who are weathering the COVID-19 pandemic away from home and loved ones. Pray for courage and strength for our missionaries.
- Pray for continued provision for those who are losing jobs, getting laid off, or wondering how to pay rent and utilities, and buy food when they can't go to work.
- Pray for church members in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and other European countries who have lost loved ones to the coronavirus. Pray for comfort and strength to pick up and carry on.



Day 11 - Prayer Focus - Monday, April 6, 2020

God's Rainbow of Assurance

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Matt. 7:7-8

“The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We have sinned against Him, and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas, ‘Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.’ Jeremiah 14:21. When we come to Him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us.”

Christ Object Lessons, p. 148

Heart Questions:

Reflect on the three different types of prayer as seen in Matthew 7:7-8. What is the significance of the rainbow around God's throne? What is God's pledge to us? What is staked against the honor of His throne? How does this give you confidence today?

- Pray for the ongoing health crisis throughout the United States and Europe. Pray that medical professionals can get the adequate supplies that are needed.
- Pray for health professionals, security workers, and essential government service personnel across the United States and around the world who have contracted COVID-19 while in the line of duty and service to others. Pray for healing for them.
- Pray for those living alone during this health pandemic, those struggling with fear, and those feeling the pain of isolation. Pray that they would discover they are not alone but that Jesus is right by their side.
- Pray for all churches in your local region that may have been closed because of the virus. Pray that congregations will find ways to stay “together” through internet

live-streaming and witnessing in appropriate “social distancing” ways, and that many more will be drawn to the truth because of this time of crisis.

- Pray for that God would re-ignite fresh passion in the hearts of His people—fresh passion for His Word, for prayer, and for mission!



Day 12 – Prayer Focus - Tuesday, April 7, 2020

God’s Covenant with Us

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chron. 7:14

“The members of our churches need to be converted, to become more spiritual-minded.

A chain of earnest, praying believers should encircle the world. Let all pray in humility. A few neighbors may meet together to pray for the Holy Spirit. Let those who cannot leave home, gather in their children, and unite in learning to pray together. They may claim the promise of the Saviour: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’” *Review and Herald*, January 3, 1907, par. 4

Heart Questions:

What four heart conditions is God looking for, based on 2 Chronicles 7:14? What type of attitude should we have when we pray? Why is united prayer so important? How can we experience united prayer even while apart?

- Pray that we would know as a church what it means to walk in humility before God and before each other. Pray that He would teach us how to pray, how to repent, and that healing would come as we seek God with all our hearts.
- Pray that God would help us as a people know what it means to be more spiritually minded, and how to create a chain of prayer around the world.
- Pray for church members living in the South England Conference in London. Pray that rather than this pandemic discouraging church members, there would be church growth, increased commitment to God and service.
- Pray for our youth across Europe, to come back to church, and for parents to be strong positive role models by bringing their children to church.
- Pray that every person, no matter their age, their gender, their official title or status, would recognize that they are to be witnesses and messengers of God’s love to a dying world.



Day 13 – Prayer Focus - Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Our Eyes are Upon You!

“O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

2 Chron. 20:12

“God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our griefs, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness compassed us about...Think of this, children of suffering and sorrow, and rejoice in hope. ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ 1 John 5:4.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 12

Heart Questions:

What does it mean to keep our eyes on Jesus? What happens sometimes when our eyes are blinded by tears? What is God longing to do? Just as God’s heart is open to our sorrows and grief, so our heart should be open to the sorrow and grief of others. How can we extend His arm of compassion and tender sympathy to those around us today?

- Pray for those that are broken, for those that have recently lost loved ones, and for those struggling to feel that God is still near.
- Pray for church members facing challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic across the country of Canada. Pray for strength and peace, and healing. Pray for spiritual revival and that the gospel will advance throughout Canada as a result of these challenging times.
- Pray for selfless love and giving to be the life of church members worldwide. Pray that those who have more resources would reach out and share with those who have less.
- Pray that church members worldwide would put away their differences and come close in Christian fellowship, pleading for the Latter Rain.
- Pray that church members worldwide would take personal responsibility for sharing the gospel with those around them even in the wake of large evangelistic events being canceled.



Day 14 – Prayer Focus - Thursday, April 9, 2020

Purified through the Fire

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Rom. 8:18

“Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The believers in Christ, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. On earth they walk in narrow paths; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but thus they learn the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ’s sufferings, they can look beyond the gloom to the glory, saying, ‘I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.’ Romans 8:18.”

Acts of the Apostles, p. 576

Heart Questions:

What is the glory that Romans 8:18 speaks of? Why is trials and suffering used to purify us? What have you learned about yourself through the trials of the recent weeks? Do you recognize weak spots that you didn’t realize you had? How do you want God to grow you and purify you during this time of fear and isolation that is sweeping over the world?

- Pray for heavenly vision that we can see beyond the grave, beyond the pain and suffering and hardship of this life, to see the heavenly reward that awaits those that are faithful to the end.
- Pray for wisdom for pastors and administrators as they seek to comfort and encourage and lead in the midst of chaos.
- Pray for our children that are out of school, and especially for those who relied on the meals that they received at school. Pray that God would raise up caring Christians to find ways to feed them during this time of crisis.
- Pray that God’s love would so fill us, so move us, so break our hearts afresh, that we could not contain it, but would share it with those who have no hope.
- Pray that we will understand and actively share the message of “Righteousness by Faith” and that we will rest in the righteousness of Jesus.

Removing Spiritual Breaches

And Becoming the Repairer of the Breach!

In Isaiah 58, God's people are instructed, "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isa. 58:12).

How do we practically become the repairer of the breach for the church, or for those lost in darkness? What does it mean to build up the old waste places?

As leaders in the church, it is very easy to point fingers at others weaknesses and faults, and tell other people what they need to change in their life. It's also easy to tell our fellow leaders how they could be more effective in ministry. But could there possibly be some breaches in our own spiritual wall that might be keeping back the Holy Spirit and hindering our own effectiveness in ministry?

"There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church" (*1st Selected Messages*, p. 124).

It's really important that we take time for self-examination, so we know what breaches we have. In the book *Pastoral Ministry*, we find the following challenge:

"I have been shown that many are in the greatest danger of failing to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord... There is with nearly all a neglect of self-examination... You will receive more strength by spending one hour each day in meditation, and mourning over your failings and heart-corruptions, and pleading for God's pardoning love, and the assurance of sins forgiven, than you would by spending many hours and days... making yourself acquainted with every objection to our faith, and the most powerful evidences in favor of our faith" (*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 24,25).

As we recognize that the enemy is trying to weaken our spiritual fortress, so he can overcome us and keep us from being fully effective in God's service, we should prayerfully ask the Lord to search our heart (Ps. 139:23,24). The Bible tells us, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Although not exhaustive in its scope, the following pages contain a list of common spiritual breaches that hinder the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We encourage you to prayerfully review this list when you have some extra quiet time with God. Also, as you pray, ask the Lord if there are any other breaches/beams that are hindering your walk with Him, things that may not be mentioned here. If we ask with an earnest heart, He will show us!

We are told, "The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us" (*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 148). God's Word is faithful, and He will give you deliverance. (See Heb. 7:25)

Common Breaches that Hold Back the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our Lives:

Unconfessed sin: Anything that we've done wrong towards God, towards His law, towards our own body, or towards others and not made right. (See the following categories!)

- **Promises for those who Confess their sins** (1 John 1:9, 1 Cor. 15:57)

Idols: In this case, I am not talking about "graven images." I am referring to anything that comes between God and us, or anything that is more important in our life than our relationship and quality time with God each day. If we have an "idol," it will often consume our attention, focus, and thought life to the exclusion of other healthy activities, family needs, or ministry tasks. (*Note: Even "ministry" can become an idol if it comes between us and our maintaining a daily relationship connection with God!*)

- **Promises for those who put away Idols** (Ezek 36:25-27, Jer. 24:7)

Addictions: These breaches could be the same as our "idols" or they might be different. An addiction might be a physical substance or food, or a habit or activity that you can't imagine giving up: like being a gossip addict, a TV addict, a social media addict, a pornography addict, an attention/fame addict, or a sugar addict. But if God is to remain the King of our life, He must be the Lord of our life! *In fact, He must be our addiction.*

- **Promises for overcoming Addictions** (Luke 18:27, Ps. 55:16-18)

Ungodly Mindsets: The most popular ungodly mindsets might include, but are not limited to: pride, pride in our achievements and spiritual accomplishments, pride in our talents, pride in our leadership and status, feeling superiority over others, arrogance, self-righteousness, selfishness, self-seeking, self-promotion, greed, lusts, jealousy, envy, vanity, gluttony, anxiety, irritability, impatience, anger, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, discontentment, unthankfulness, fear, self-pity, pessimism, doubt toward God, spiritual laziness and apathy, unbelief, hate, victimization, unteachable in spirit, disrespect for those in authority, unholy thoughts and desires, and seeking our own rather than others best interest.

- **Promises for overcoming Ungodly Mindsets** (Isa. 26:3, Ps. 119:165, Phil. 4:8)

Ungodly Conversations: These breaches are also seldom addressed, yet they are quite prevalent, even in the lives of professing Christians. They might include, but are not limited to: gossiping, (even spiritual gossiping while justifying itself with the motive of edifying others can be included), sarcasm, criticism, backbiting, judgementalism, complaining, murmuring, exaggerating tales, lying, inappropriate flirtation, vulgar and foul language, vocalized disrespect, cynicism, expressing doubt toward God, toward the church,

toward ministry success, leadership, and more. God tells us, “He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls.” (Prov. 25:28)

- **Promises to help overcome Ungodly Conversations** (Isa. 6:5-7, Eph. 4:22,23,29)

Ungodly Behaviors: Some of these breaches may be quite normal in the society in which we live, but they are not acceptable to God. These behaviors might include, but are not limited to: self promotion, self-aggrandizement, manipulation, taking advantage of others weaknesses, practicing fraud, cheating, abusing others’ trust, failing to honor our word, being lazy on the job, being greedy, gluttonous, not following health laws and neglecting to take care of our body—God’s temple, stealing, back-stabbing, disrespecting those in authority, tearing down another’s character, wasting time, wasting money, wasting resources, having debt, using people to get what we want, expecting to be waited on hand and foot, always trying to prove we are right, and being defiant when we are corrected.

- **Promises to overcome Ungodly Behaviors** (Rom. 12:18-21, 1 Cor. 10:13)

Ungodly Relationships: The most common relationship breaches come from inappropriate relationships between the opposite sexes (both inside and outside of marriage), unbiblical sexual relationships between the same sex, or romantic relationships between a believer and an unbeliever. Emotional adultery and lusts could also fit in this category.

- **Promises for victory over Ungodly Relationships** (2 Cor. 6:4, and 1 Sam 16:7)

Worldly Preoccupations: Satan’s key goal is to get us to love the world rather than God. Breaches might include: Status, love of money, love of expensive fashions, expensive cars, excessive love for temporal pleasures. God tells us, “Where our treasure is, there our heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21).

- **Promises for overcoming Worldly Preoccupations** (Col. 3:1-3, Rom. 12:1,2)

Satanic Strongholds: Obviously as Bible believing Christians, there are certain things we should not ever be involved with! Drugs, tobacco, alcohol (or any other addictive substance), including anything of the occult are off limits for Christians. So also should be much of the secular music being played on the radio station, as well as movies and TV programs and books featuring magic, spiritualism, mysticism, science fiction, witches, vampires, or the occult. The Bible tells us that there is to be NO fellowship between light and darkness.

- **Promises for overcoming Satanic Strongholds** (2 Cor. 10:3-4, and Ps. 40:2,3)

Ungodly sins of Omission: Often we congratulate ourselves on what we aren’t doing wrong, and fail to recognize what we aren’t doing right. These “breaches of omission” are the attitudes and lifestyles that God has called us to live as Christians that we often fall so short in such as: lack of truly seeking after God with our whole heart, lack of true complete heart surrender, lack of abhorrence for our sins and those things that wound Christ afresh, lack of earnestness to receive more of the Holy Spirit which is the only thing that will give us victory over sin, lack of spiritual zeal and life, lack of the fruit of the Spirit in our life (See Gal. 5:22), lack of faith, lack of humility, lack of trust in God’s Word, lack of sincere

interest in deep Bible study and prayer, lack of spiritual fortitude and backbone when the battle around us increases against the Truths of God's Word, lack of self control, lack of seeking to apply the NEWSTART principles in our daily life, lack of taking care of our physical body so that we can be most receptive for the Holy Spirit to speak to us, lack of warmth and love towards our brethren, lack of friendliness towards strangers and those different from us, lack of kindness and willingness to sacrifice for the poor and for the least of these, lack of willingness to be inconvenienced to help others in need, lack of taking up our cross daily and denying ourselves for the sake of the gospel, lack of willingness to wrestle and agonize in prayer for others, lack of desire and effort to stand in the gap as intercessors for a perishing land, lack of pain over how we hinder and hold back God's work by our spiritual apathy, and the list goes on and on.

- **Promises for Forgiveness of Sins of Omission** (1 John 1:9, Eph. 2:8-9, Jer. 33:3)

Thankfully we are told that Christ came to set the captives free, to make our crooked ways straight, and to break apart the chains that bind us (see Isa 58:6, and Isa. 45:2).

Ellen White writes, "Let sin be called by its right name, and let it be purged from the church by confession, repentance, and reformation, that the members may not present before angels and men a misrepresentation of the truths they profess to believe. Let the words of the apostle, spoken so clearly and distinctly, and with such tenderness and love, break down every barrier. Let God's people make earnest, thorough work for repentance. **Do not be zealous to humble one another. Humble yourselves. Take hold of your own case, and by humble confession stand clear before God**" (*Signs of the Times*, October 30, 1901 par. 11-13).

Six Steps to Freedom in Jesus

1. Humbly acknowledge to God the specific sin that comes to your mind. (Yes, He already knows, but speaking it to God brings it to the surface so that He is able to remove it from your heart. Acknowledging your specific sin to God is like saying, "God, I finally get it! I agree with You! This was wrong!")

2. Ask forgiveness from God. It's only when we first acknowledge the sin and then ask Him to wash us clean, based on the merits of His shed blood, that the cleaning really can take place. It is at that moment that we ask for and receive His forgiveness that we really are washed clean.

3. Turn and walk a new and different way. The Bible calls it repentance. It simply means deciding to no longer do that sin again. This is not just a feeling of remorse for our sin, it's a practical change of our life so that we don't allow that sin to find its way back into our heart and life ever again. Find specific promises in the Bible to claim as you pray that God helps you walk a new path in victory and His strength. Not only should we walk a new way, but we have to ask God to give us a new heart we will loathe the sins we once embraced!

"Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 23).

4. Ask God to show you if anything else needs to be done about your specific sin. If your sin affected someone else, you should go to those you have wronged and ask for forgiveness. (Whether or not they extend forgiveness, at least you've done your part.) If you stole you may need to repay with interest. If you lied then you may need to set the record straight by telling the truth and attempting to undo the effects of your lie as much as possible.

IMPORTANT: There are a few exceptions to this step. If your specific sin involved something that you harbored in your mind like lust, jealousy, or envy – then it is NOT always appropriate to confess those particular sins to the target of your wrong thoughts.

There isn't a set formula for making wrongs right. That is why we must go to God and say, **"God I'm willing to do whatever I need to do to make this right – so please show me what I need to do."** It's a hard prayer to pray, but if we allow God to direct us, it is amazing how radically our life can be changed in even a short period of time. Sometimes God may want you to do something large to make right what or who you wronged, but other times His requests may be as simple as beginning to show the love of Christ to someone in a practical way.

5. Obey what God leads you to do. When you say to God that you are willing to do whatever it takes to make things right, then when He communicates that You need to do something – do it! **And claim His promises. He will help you. Keep praying the Word!**

As Jacob wrestled through the night, we too must wrestle until the breaking of the day. We must hold on to God saying, "I will not let you go until you bless me! I will not let go until you give me deliverance in this area of my life!" This is not a presumptuous prayer. We aren't praying for our own selfish fleshly lusts or desires. We are praying for victory over the spiritual breaches in our life. We are praying for spiritual fortification. We are praying to have a new heart and a new spirit so that the Holy Spirit can truly be poured out in our life. These are things that God has promised to give us.

6. Start a Bible verse collection of promises to claim when you are tempted to return to your old ways. Any time you see the enemy trying to bring spiritual compromise back into your life, fight back with God's Word. God will give you the victory.

Ellen White tells us, "With watchfulness and prayer [our] weakest points can be so guarded as to become [our] strongest points, and [we] can encounter temptation without being overcome" (*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 124).

These thoughts are excerpts taken from the book titled, "Daring to Ask for More: Divine Keys to Answered Prayer," by Melody Mason, Copyright Pacific Press 2014.