

— REVISED & EXPANDED —

20TH

ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

PRAYERS
THAT HEAL THE
Heart

PRAYER COUNSELING
THAT BREAKS EVERY YOKE

MARK & PATTI VIRKLER

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THAT HEAL THE
Heart

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**Prayers That Heal the Heart, Revised and Expanded:
Prayer Counseling That Breaks Every Yoke**

by Mark & Patti Virkler

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those presenting various healing models each incorporating divine encounter. The group below was drawn together by Cathy Little and Melinda Wilson of Face to Face Ministries.

- Restoring the Foundations—restoringthefoundations.org
- Elijah House Ministries—elijahhouseministries.org
- Bethel Sozo—bethelsozo.com
- Rita Bennett Ministries—emotionallyfree.org
- Face to Face Ministries—facetofaceministries.org
- Christian Healing Ministries—christianhealingmin.org
- Immanuel Approach—immanuelapproach.com
- Jim and Pat Banks Ministries—jimandpatbanks.com
- Communion With God Ministries—cwgministries.org
- Shiloh Place Ministries—shilohplace.org
- HeartSync Ministries—heartsyncministries.org
- Ellel Ministries—ellel.org/uk/about/ellel-grange

FOREWORD

In 2003 I had just embarked upon my journey of inner healing. A Christian for twenty-seven years at the time, I had already experienced a level of emotional healing. Still, now the Lord was taking me on a further journey. A friend had given me the book, *Prayers That Heal the Heart*. I read it with great enthusiasm and was eager to learn how to apply its principles, but I have to admit that I wasn't entirely sure how it worked. When I heard that the author would be teaching the material in a live seminar, I jumped at the chance to go.

As Mark presented the need to hear God's voice and use the eyes of our heart, everything I had read in the book fell into place, and I was able to experience the power and efficacy of the seven prayers.

I didn't know that this would ignite a flame in my heart to see others receive healing the way I had that would burn brightly for years to come. I only knew then that *Prayers That Heal the Heart* had led me through the process of getting set free from shame. My book, *Leaving Home—Finding Home: My Journey From Shame to Sonship Through Journaling*, chronicled that healing and the integral part that *Prayers That Heal the Heart* played in it.

Since then, it has been my privilege to count Mark as a spiritual advisor and friend. I was all too happy to help when

he invited me to give feedback on this revision to *Prayers That Heal the Heart*. What he and Patti have produced is an even more powerful tool for healing.

In the first chapter, the authors lay out the foundation for healing: connecting deeply with the Father and experiencing His love through hearing His voice. Each subsequent chapter will take you deeper into a solid Biblical understanding of the wounded heart and God's provision for healing. A few new sections have been added, notably, chapters on physical healing and trauma.

Among other things, you will learn the language of the heart, the necessity for confession, repentance and forgiveness, and the graciousness of God to replace ashes with beauty.

The journaling exercises and prayer assignments will provide practical applications of what you are reading and deepen your understanding of what is going on in your heart.

This book is full of scriptural principles and definitions that will inform your journey to healing and wholeness and is presented in simple terms for the layman and the practitioner alike.

Today I am a prayer counselor with my own ministry. *Prayers That Heal the Heart* is an invaluable tool that I regularly use to help clients get set free to be and do all that God has called them to be and do. I see amazing results as we pray through generational sins and curses, ungodly soul ties, negative beliefs and inner vows, word curses, traumatic memories and demonic oppression.

Over the years, I have used the principles and teachings of this book to pray through my own heart issues as the Holy Spirit has led.

Whether you are new to inner healing as I was in 2003 or have gone through much healing, this way of praying WILL

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revolutionize your life. One student told me that after 20+ years of her healing journey, she experienced what she called a “great spiritual tidying up” due to *Prayers That Heal the Heart*.

I encourage you to take a deep dive into this new and enhanced edition. I am confident that it will be a well-worn resource in your library.

—Jessie Mejias
Sunodía Prayer Counseling
sunodia.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to our contributing writers which include: Jim Banks from Jim and Pat Banks Ministries, Dawna De Silva from Bethel Sozo Ministries, Rochelle Holben from Elijah House Ministries, Karl Lehman and Kent Larson from Immanuel Approach.

Special thanks to Steve and Kay Cox, Bill and Sue Banks, Dennis and Rita Bennett—founders of Christian Renewal Association, Peter Horrobin—founder of Ellel Ministries, Chester and Betsy Kylstra—founders of Restoring the Foundations, John and Paula Sandford—founders of Elijah House and Francis and Judith MacNutt—founders of Christian Healing Ministry. Each of these ministries has provided a stimulus in the writing of this book.

Special thanks to Gale Chapple and her counselees who allowed us to test out these principles in their counseling sessions. Special thanks to those who helped critique this book. This includes Paul Stanton, Patty Sadallah and Jessie Mejias, and to Michael Sullivant who helped widen my understanding.

Thank you all for your friendship and your amazing contributions to the body of Christ. To any others whom I may have forgotten to mention, special thanks to you as well.

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ENDORSEMENTS

“In their book, *Prayers That Heal the Heart*, Mark and Patti Virkler give us valuable practical tools for applying the teachings so many of us have pioneered in inner healing and deliverance. Much has been discovered. What has been lacking is how the common man can apply inner healing revelations to his own life. Some have wanted healing to happen sovereignly, by God’s intervention, or through the prayers of others (requiring little personal effort), and sometimes it does occur those ways. But we who are in the inner healing ministry have long wanted tools to help those who know that healing often requires diligent personally disciplined efforts. Mark and Patti’s book goes a long way towards filling that ‘how-to’ gap. Their book is really a workbook, an invaluable hand-out for counselors to assign to their counselees. Much healing and transformation can result from its use.”

—JOHN SANDFORD, Co-founder of Elijah House

“A person who is sick and doesn’t know it will never go to a doctor. A Christian who is crippled on the inside but who thinks his life is normal will never ask for help! Many Christians struggle with major issues in their life but are ignorant of the fact that the victory Jesus won for them on the cross does not only assure them of eternal salvation, but also provides the keys to healing.

“Mark Virkler’s new book is a very practical guide to how the keys to healing that are contained within Scripture can be applied with great effect in the life of a believer. His own testimony illustrates how God brought deep healing into his own life as he looked again at the consequences of things that had happened in earlier days and was willing to let God have His way.

The road to healing is not, however, a road without choices. Some of the choices are like cross-roads with different ways to go—do I go this way or that way? Am I willing to forgive or not forgive? Am I willing to own mistakes I have made or am I going to sweep them under the carpet? Am I going to admit to the consequences of wrong relationships or pretend they never happened? Have I really understood that in life there is a law of sowing and reaping? These and many other issues are tackled with sensitivity and genuine insight and in such a practical way that the teaching can be readily applied.

“An excellent book which will encourage pastors and people alike to begin a journey towards wholeness and realize that discipleship and healing are two facets of the same precious diamond of truth.”

—PETER HORROBIN, International Director of Ellet Ministries
Ellet Grange, England

“Mark and Patti have creatively and concisely expressed the Lord’s revelations to them, to us, and to others. We are delighted that the revelation, understanding, and necessity for the Integrated Approach to Ministry will be shared even more broadly throughout the Body of Christ. The Virklers have expressed these revelations in a very user-friendly and practical way. With

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the exercises and worksheets, anyone that desires can use these tools to receive more healing and freedom from the Lord. This is His Heart, that our hearts be healed.”

—CHESTER AND BETSY KYLSTRA, Founders and Overseers of
Proclaiming His Word Ministries

This book, *Prayers That Heal the Heart*, is another confirmation that experience is indeed the best teacher. Mark’s personal experience has provided needed insight and has paved a very practical way for people to become healed from the wounds, bondages and mindsets that accompany the ups and downs of life. I am particularly thankful for the worksheets and exercises provided that help individuals thoroughly process their way through each element of the healing process. Well done!

—JIM BANKS, Founder of Jim and Pat Banks Ministries

For those who have not been trained to hear God’s voice, this book is a must buy! In it you will find 7 interlocking prayers to experience thorough healing of the heart and practical worksheets making each step easy to follow and apply. Once you understand God is interested in connecting with you, you will be able to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you into freedom!

—DAWNA DE SILVA, Founder and Co-Leader of Bethel Sozo
betheltransformationcenter.com, Author of *Sozo: Saved, Healed,
Delivered, Shifting Atmospheres, Overcoming Fear,
90 Day Declarations*, and *Warring With Wisdom*

Mark Virkler's book is a foundational healing resource which I heartily recommend. As a veteran of inner healing, as a recipient, a student, a teacher and now a trainer of prayer ministers, one of the most important concepts in heart healing is that healing doesn't happen outside of relationship. This book makes that clear. Learning to receive and experience God's love as a right hemisphere brain experience is not only necessary, but vital for true healing to occur. Dr. Virkler lays out simple but powerful tools which guide people into transformational encounters with the tangible love of God. When done in partnership with a praying friend or guide, the process carries even greater effectiveness. I appreciate this book and highly recommend it to anyone desiring to receive healing for themselves or help others.

—MELINDA WILSON, Co-Founder and Director
Face to Face Ministries, facetofaceministries.org

Dr. Mark Virkler is one of the most gifted authors and teachers of our day with a powerful anointing to brilliantly boil down big concepts of the Christian life into simple and accessible bites. In *Prayers That Heal the Heart*, he beautifully lays out proven tools for the reader to experience greater emotional freedom—prayers that will move you from places of fear, doubt, anger, and unbelief into true joy, peace, love, and gratitude. This book is a beautiful companion for your healing journey.

—CATHY LITTLE, Co-Director, Face to Face Ministries

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PROLOGUE—MY HEALING IN AUSTRALIA

TOUCHDOWN

Our plane landed at 6:00 A.M. in Sydney, Australia. It was the last day of August and the weather was still warm. The entire city was under construction, as in just twelve months the 2000 Olympics would be held here. My wife Patti and I spent the day sightseeing, taking in a bus tour of the city and a two-and-a-half hour boat tour of the beautiful Sydney Harbor. We hoped that if we stayed up all day we would be able to sleep in the evening and get our body clocks readjusted from Buffalo, NY time, which was a full 14 hours different than Sydney time.

It worked. We slept the entire night and were ready the next day for a two-hour drive to Newcastle, where I would begin the first of five ten-hour Hearing God's Voice training seminars in five different cities in Australia.

This was my fifth trip to Australia in twelve years. Peacemakers Ministries had published our book *Communion with God* as well as other titles in Australia, and had been responsible for scheduling four of the five tours in Australia, including this one.

As I prepared for the first seminar at Church at the Bay, I was aware of the inner tension in my heart, which had seemed to grow stronger in recent years. I struggled with fear and doubt and

anger when I prepared to speak. I fought against them and sought to prepare my heart so I could speak and teach in the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I could teach in the anointing of the Holy Spirit—that is what everyone always said. They would tell me that the teaching was so life-giving and so transforming that everyone came out of the seminars hearing God’s voice and journaling and seeing vision. They were such exciting times, watching the transformation take place in people’s lives. I loved it. And I loved the fact that God had allowed me the privilege of committing my life’s ministry to seeing this happen over and over with audiences around the world. What a wonderful opportunity to minister unto God in such a marvelous way! I truly felt I was blessed to be called by God to carry such a message to the world as communion with Him.

However, I was increasingly disturbed by the fact that it took longer and longer to fight through the issues in my heart so that I would be ready to minister. Over the last year especially, I had struggled with a fear that people would reject the message I generally spoke on Sunday mornings entitled “Experiencing Covenant Blessings.” During the worship time before I preached, I would battle with this fear of rejection and bind it and command it to go. Eventually faith would triumph and, sure enough, as soon as I began to preach, I was fine. The message was anointed, people were challenged and transformed by it, and everything was okay.

However, it was not okay with me that the battle seemed to have become more and more intense within my heart as I prepared to preach this message. Somehow I knew I did not have the faith and confidence that I had had in my younger years,

when I was in my twenties—not that I was old then or anything like that! I was *only* 47, you see.

In my twenties, I would attack and battle anything with no fear—probably because I had no common sense! Now that I had “matured,” I had learned that there were things to fear. “Things to be cautious about,” was the way I put it. My caution, however, was actually a constant inner battle against fear and anger and rejection.

It seemed like everything made me angry. When things didn’t go right, I felt anger. When I “goofed up,” I felt anger. When I heard about the antics of the government, I felt anger. When I viewed the phariseeism in the Church, I felt extreme anger. The fear of the New Age Movement (and anything and everything else) that the Church manifests made me angry. Was the Church called to live in fear or in faith? Faith, obviously, and so I stormed against their fear as I preached in city after city.

I was not too happy, however, with the inner anguish I was experiencing. I sensed I was “damaged goods,” that life had dealt me some fairly heavy blows and my heart was not open and free as it had been in my younger years. Well, perhaps that was just the way life was. Perhaps as you grew older and wiser, you realized that life was not the utopia you had hoped it would be when you were young. Perhaps maturity was acknowledging the pain and the disappointments, and learning to live in an imperfect world, holding on as best you could. Perhaps I was just finally growing up.

Well, perhaps, but perhaps not, for you see the Lord was preparing me for big change. Just before leaving for Australia, I had finished writing a book that capsulized the lessons God had

taught me during my 32 years as a Christian. One of the things I had reviewed in Chapter Four of this book, *Wading Deeper In The River Of God*, was the ways God heals the heart. I had reviewed what I had learned over the years concerning inner healing, deliverance, renouncing negative expectations and inner vows, and breaking generational sins and curses. In addition, just a week before leaving for Australia, I had discovered from my mom that her father, my grandfather, was a Mason.

I was coming to the conclusion that perhaps I needed prayer ministry to heal some of these things in my heart. God's grace and leading always astound and amaze me! Not only was there a brand new book on Peacemakers' book table detailing how to become free from the generational power of Freemasonry, but at the first church I preached at in Australia, I met a surgeon, Stephen Cox, who told me how he and his wife work together in ministering to his patients. His wife, Kay, is extremely skilled in ministering inner healing, deliverance, and the breaking of generational sins and curses. He told me of one of his patients who had gone through two or three surgeries for abdominal pain, yet no one had been able to find the root cause. He asked this patient if she would like Kay to pray with her. She agreed, so Kay asked her, "When did the pain begin?" She answered, "About five years ago." Kay's next question was, "What did you do five years ago?" She replied, "I had my tarot cards read." A quick renunciation and prayer of deliverance brought this patient to health and canceled her need for future surgery.

Stephen joked that he is careful not to give all his patients to his wife for prayer ministry or he wouldn't have a job anymore!

That was enough for me. With my inner battle against

anger, fear, and doubt, and eighteen days of constant teaching set before me, I asked what I should have asked for a few years earlier: “Is there any chance you and your wife could get together and pray for me?” The answer was immediate and affirmative. I was thrilled. The following day, Sunday afternoon after I had preached, we got together and Steve and Kay prayed for two-and-a-half hours with me.

Kay was the most anointed, effective, Spirit-led minister from whom I have ever had the privilege of receiving ministry. With an adeptness and skill that took my breath away, she identified various demons, negative expectations, and inner vows, along with generational sins, which we broke and of which I repented.

That day I was set free from various generational sins and curses, several inner vows and negative expectations, and about half a dozen demons. The change was powerful and instantaneous. I preached that night with a new freedom, a freedom I had never had in my entire 30 years of ministry, since some of these inner spiritual forces had been with me since birth. And some, of course, I had picked up in more recent years.

My new-found freedom lasted the entire 18-day ministry tour in Australia, and continues today. I was astounded! I am astounded—over several things. One is that I have experienced such a wonderful new freedom in my heart in the areas in which I received deliverance. These were problems I had battled for years and just assumed they were a part of who I was. I figured they were a part of the battle of life. And now I found that they were negative spiritual forces operating within me and seeking to bring me down.

How could I, as a Spirit-filled pastor and teacher in the body of Christ, make such a horrific mistake? How could I assume that these things were *me*, when in actuality they were demons within me? How could I be so unaware of the reality of spiritual forces within me, especially since I had ministered deliverance and inner healing to hundreds, if not thousands, myself? How could I have battled these things, using ineffective prayers that did not solve the problems but only put a Band-Aid on them for a short time? How could I have been so blind?

I was elated over my healing, but aghast at the spiritual blindness which had allowed me to walk for so many years under the influence of negative spiritual energies within my heart and my soul. I knew I must search out and discover what I had failed to see. I realized I needed to experience an even deeper revelation of a truth I had written about years earlier, the truth that I am a vessel who contains another. Most of what goes on inside me is not me but the one I contain. The negative energies within me are driven by the sin energies of the curse and/or demons. The positive energies are empowered by the blessing and Holy Spirit of God.¹

Since I am a teacher, I wanted to share with others the story of my healing and my new understandings so they would not need to walk in bondage as I had.

I began by rereading the books on my shelves on inner healing, deliverance, breaking generational sins, and renouncing inner vows and negative expectations, for I was sure these all worked together to destroy a life, and that the counselor who would heal must use them all together in order to be mightily effective.

I re-read *The Transformation of the Inner Man* by John and Paula Sandford, *Restoring the Foundations* by Chester and Betsy Kylstra, *Healing Through Deliverance* by Peter Horrobin, *Healing From the Inside Out* by Tom Marshall, and others.

I meditated and prayed, dialogued with these authors, and then wrote my story of what God was showing me so I would not be easily caught in this trap again, and so I could help others who were likewise in bondage to find the release and healing I had found. That is what this book is about. It is what I have discovered about how to determine one's need for such prayer ministries, what these ministries are, and how to progress through them. The design is practical, and has examples to help you throughout the material. As I come to the sections that discuss the different kinds of healing prayer, I will describe in more detail my own personal healing as it relates to the area being discussed.

I will try to be extremely practical, so an individual or a small group can pray through these different kinds of prayers and receive ministry themselves. Obviously, if one can receive ministry from a skilled counselor who knows all these types of prayer ministries and can minister them under the anointing and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that is by far the best. However, if that kind of person cannot be accessed for one reason or another, then this book becomes a place to start in praying these prayers for yourself and for others in your small group.

We have extended teaching articles on our website for those who want to go deeper on certain subjects and often refer the interested reader to those specific blogs.

PRIDE AND RECEIVING MINISTRY FROM A STRANGER

Was it easier for me to receive ministry from a complete stranger in Australia than it was from someone I know? Perhaps. I suppose we always like to think we have it all together and to project that image. To admit that we are not seems hard for some reason. Perhaps we want to be able to say we have reached some outstanding spiritual level in our Christian walk, and to admit that we still have such negative energies harassing us just seems to be unspiritual.

Well, I have decided that it is best if I simply accept the fact that I am a saint who still sometimes sins. Without a daily dose of God's almighty grace to sustain me, I am nothing. I am content with that. If you need me to be more than that, then I will have to disappoint you. If I need me to be more than that, then I will just have to disappoint myself. Perhaps, however, being a vessel filled and sustained daily with the grace of God is a sufficient function for people. Perhaps I should be more than content that this miracle can happen on a daily basis. Perhaps I should be glad to simply celebrate this wonderful miracle and let it go at that.

HEALING PRAYERS WE WILL LEARN ABOUT IN FUTURE CHAPTERS

1. Breaking generational sins and curses by putting the cross of Jesus between the generations (Ex. 20:4-6).
2. Identifying and renouncing ungodly soul ties.
3. Identifying and renouncing negative expectations and replacing them with godly expectations.
4. Identifying and renouncing inner vows (underlying promises

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you have made because of the hurts you have experienced).

Replacing these with godly purposes.

5. Experiencing inner healing, allowing Jesus to walk through the art gallery of your heart, removing pictures which do not have Him in them and replacing them with pictures which do have Him in them.
6. Replacing word curses by speaking blessing.
7. Experiencing deliverance, becoming free of demons in the name of Jesus Christ. Once the demons' home is dismantled by the preceding six steps, demons come out quite easily.

PERSONAL JOURNALING APPLICATION

1. Are there any areas of your heart or mind that are under constant attack by the enemy? Do you fight with negatives in any area of your life? Is this a continual battle? If so, it is likely an area that could be helped with some prayer ministry.
2. Have you ever experienced inner healing, deliverance, or any of the other prayer ministries mentioned in this chapter? If so, can you recall and describe the situation and the release it brought to your life?
3. Are there any areas in your life today that might be improved if you experienced more prayer ministry?

GROUP APPLICATION

1. Invite people to share their answers to the above questions as they feel comfortable doing so. Do not force anyone to share what they do not feel ready to.
2. Pray at least a general prayer for God's sustaining grace to minister to the needs of those who share. If you have

someone skilled in the prayer ministries discussed in this book, that person may feel led to pray more specifically for an individual in the group. If there is an individual in the group who desires such prayer ministry even this first week, invite him or her to volunteer and, as long as you have one in the group trained in at least one of these prayer approaches, that one, along with the group, may minister to the volunteer.

3. Close in worship for what God has done.
-

ENDNOTE

1. See *Naturally Supernatural* by the same author.

PART
One

Chapter One

HEALING BEGINS BY EXPERIENCING THE FATHER'S LOVE

Jesus is the “Wonderful Counselor.”

*His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.* (Isaiah 9:6)

Hearing the voice of my Wonderful Counselor was for me, and many others, the key to experiencing the Father's love. For the first ten years of my Christian life, I was not able to identify God's voice within me, even though He was speaking to me. So to me, God was distant and harsh and legalistic. I discovered so many laws in the Bible and I just couldn't keep them all, even though I utilized all the strength my flesh could muster (Rom. 7:5). I was failing and I felt condemned. The verse, “there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” just was not working for me (Rom. 8:1).

That all changed the day I learned to hear His voice. It was so exciting that I spent five hours that day writing out what the Lord was speaking to me. My biggest discovery was how much He loved me. It was the first time I had touched unconditional, incomprehensible love (Rom. 5:5; Eph. 3:17-19). It blew me away.

My heavenly Father's love for me was so much stronger and more compassionate than my love for myself. He actually taught me how to love myself and, as a result, how to love others. He told me to observe how tenderly He loved me. I did, and it was astounding. When I was beating on myself for failing, He wasn't. He said to me, "It's just a learning curve mistake. No big deal. Let's press on." I was experiencing the Father's love! You will, too, as you learn how to hear His voice and do two-way journaling. So let's dig right in to the four keys God taught me that day. Two-way journaling transformed me, my marriage, my relationship with others, my preaching, and everything I did.

Hearing from Him is key to healing our hearts. In this chapter we will teach you four very simple keys that will allow you to enter into a two-way journaling dialogue with Jesus, where He provides wonderful counsel. **The four keys are: stop, look, listen and write.**

WHEN I LEARNED TO HEAR HIS VOICE

During the years we had a ministering household my wife simply couldn't handle all the work on her own. Our ministering household included remnants of three struggling families plus our own toddler and newborn. Everyone had to pull their own weight. At fourteen, Rachel and her younger brother were living

with us while her parents tried to overcome lifestyle patterns that had resulted in the children running away to escape the dysfunction. I felt sorry for Rachel, but, honestly my wife was my greatest concern.

When Rachel once again ignored her chores to spend time with her friends, I decided it was time to lay down the law and make it very clear that if she was going to live under my roof, she would obey my rules.

But...she wasn't home yet. And I had recently been learning to hear God's voice more clearly. Maybe I should try to see if I could hear anything from Him about the situation. Maybe He could give me a way to get her to do what she was supposed to (i.e. what I wanted her to do). So I went to my office and reviewed what the Lord had been teaching me from Habakkuk 2:1,2: "I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me...Then the Lord answered me and said, 'Record the vision...'"

A KEY—STILLNESS

Habakkuk said, "I will stand on my guard post..." (Hab. 2:1). **The first key to hearing God's voice is to go to a quiet place and still our own thoughts and emotions.** Psalm 46:10 encourages us to be still, let go, cease striving, and know that He is God. In Psalm 37:7 we are called to "be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him." There is a deep inner knowing in our spirits that each of us can experience when we quiet our flesh and our minds. Practicing the art of biblical meditation helps silence the outer noise and distractions clamoring for our attention.

PRAYERS THAT HEAL THE HEART

I didn't have a guard post but I did have an office, so I went there to quiet my temper and my mind. If you don't have an office or a room you can go to which is private, you may find it necessary to drive to a quiet place without your telephone, so it is just you and God.

Loving God through a quiet worship song is one very effective way to become still. In 2 Kings 3, Elisha needed a word from the Lord so he said, "Bring me a minstrel," and as the minstrel played, the Lord spoke. I have found that playing a worship song on my autoharp is the quickest way for me to come to stillness. I need to choose my song carefully; boisterous songs of praise do not bring me to stillness, but rather gentle songs that express my love and worship. And it isn't enough just to sing into the cosmos—I come into the Lord's presence most quickly and easily when I use my godly imagination to see the truth that He is right here with me and I sing my songs to Him, personally.

Along with quieting through soothing worship songs, it's also important to begin with gratitude. Psalm 100:4 instructs us to, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name." Practicing gratitude daily will get us in touch with God's goodness towards us, and according to Dr. Karl Lehman, "We have circuits in our brains that serve as the neurological hardware for running relationships, and we can connect with each other and with God much more easily when these relational circuits are online and strongly active. Furthermore, we can predictably, reliably, consistently get these relational circuits online and strongly active by recalling and connecting with positive memories, and then deliberately generating, or stirring up, strong appreciation. Therefore,

deliberately stirring up gratitude will activate our brain/mind/spirit system and the relational parts of our brains so we can hear and receive more easily from God.” As we enter into His presence with quieting and gratitude, we are ready for the second key to hearing His voice.

A KEY—FIXING MY EYES ON JESUS

“I will keep watch to see,” said the prophet. To receive the pure word of God, it is very important that my heart be properly focused as I become still, because my focus is the source of the intuitive flow. If I fix my eyes upon Jesus (Heb. 12:2), the intuitive flow comes from Jesus. But if I fix my gaze upon some desire of my heart, the intuitive flow comes out of that desire. To have a pure flow I must become still and carefully fix my eyes upon Jesus. Quietly worshiping the King and receiving out of the stillness that follows quite easily accomplishes this.

So I used **the second key to hearing God's voice: As you pray, fix the eyes of your heart upon Jesus, seeing in the Spirit the dreams and visions of Almighty God.** Habakkuk was actually looking for vision as he prayed. He opened the eyes of his heart, and looked into the spirit world to see what God wanted to show him.

God has always spoken through dreams and visions, and He specifically said that they would come to those upon whom the Holy Spirit is poured out (Acts 2:1-4, 17).

Being a logical, rational person, observable facts that could be verified by my physical senses were the foundations of my life, including my spiritual life. I had never thought of opening the eyes of my heart and looking for vision. However, I have come to

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believe that this is exactly what God wants me to do. He gave me eyes in my heart to see in the spirit the vision and movement of Almighty God. There is an active spirit world all around us, full of angels, demons, the Holy Spirit, the omnipresent Father, and His omnipresent Son, Jesus. The only reasons for me not to see this reality are unbelief or lack of knowledge.

In his sermon in Acts 2:25, Peter refers to King David's statement: "I saw the Lord always in my presence; for He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken." The original psalm makes it clear that this was a decision of David's, not a constant supernatural visitation: "I have set (literally, I have placed) the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (Ps.16:8). Because David knew that the Lord was always with him, he determined in his spirit to see that truth with the eyes of his heart as he went through life, knowing that this would keep his faith strong.

In order to see, we must look. Daniel saw a vision in his mind and said, "I was looking...I kept looking...I kept looking" (Dan. 7:2, 9, 13). As I pray, I look for Jesus, and I watch as He speaks to me, doing and saying the things that are on His heart. Many Christians will find that if they will only look, they will see. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us (Matt. 1:23). It is as simple as that. You can see Christ present with you because Christ *is* present with you. In fact, the vision may come so easily that you will be tempted to reject it, thinking that it is just you. But if you persist in recording these visions, your doubt will soon be overcome by faith as you recognize that the content of them could only be birthed in Almighty God.

HEALING BEGINS BY EXPERIENCING THE FATHER'S LOVE

Jesus demonstrated the ability of living out of constant contact with God, declaring that He did nothing on His own initiative, but only what He saw the Father doing, and heard the Father saying (Jn. 5:19,20,30). What an incredible way to live!

Is it possible for us to live out of divine initiative as Jesus did? Yes! We must simply fix our eyes upon Jesus. The veil has been torn, giving access into the immediate presence of God, and He calls us to draw near (Lk. 23:45; Heb. 10:19-22). "I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened..."

When I had quieted my heart enough that I was able to picture Jesus without the distractions of my own ideas and plans, I was able to "keep watch to see what He will speak to me." I wrote down my question: "Lord, what should I do about Rachel?"

A KEY—TUNE TO FLOWING THOUGHTS

Immediately the thought came to me, "She is insecure." Well, that certainly wasn't my thought! Her behavior looked like rebellion to me, not insecurity.

But like Habakkuk, I was coming to know the sound of God speaking to me (Hab. 2:2). Elijah described it as a still, small voice (I Kings 19:12). I had previously listened for an inner audible voice, and God does speak that way at times. However, I have found that usually, God's voice comes as spontaneous thoughts, visions, feelings, or impressions.

For example, haven't you been driving down the road and had a thought come to you to pray for a certain person? Didn't you believe it was God telling you to pray? What did God's voice sound like? Was it an audible voice, or was it a spontaneous thought that dropped into your mind?

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Experience indicates that we perceive spirit-level communication as spontaneous thoughts, impressions and visions, and Scripture confirms this in many ways. For example, one definition of *paga*, a Hebrew word for intercession, is “a chance encounter or an accidental intersecting.” When God lays people on our hearts, He does it through *paga*, a chance-encounter thought “accidentally” intersecting our minds.

So **the third key to hearing God’s voice is recognizing that God’s voice in your heart often sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts.** Therefore, when I want to hear from God, I tune to chance-encounter or spontaneous thoughts.

A KEY—TWO-WAY JOURNALING

Finally, God told Habakkuk to record the vision (Hab. 2:2). This was not an isolated command. The Scriptures record many examples of individual’s prayers and God’s replies, such as the Psalms, many of the prophets, and Revelation. I have found that obeying this final principle amplified my confidence in my ability to hear God’s voice so that I could finally make living out of His initiatives a way of life. **The fourth key, two-way journaling, or the writing out of your prayers and God’s answers, brings great freedom in hearing God’s voice.**

I have found two-way journaling to be a fabulous catalyst for clearly discerning God’s inner, spontaneous flow, because as I journal I am able to write in faith for long periods of time, simply believing it is God. What I believe I have received from God must be tested. However, testing involves doubt and doubt blocks divine communication, so I do not want to test while I am trying to receive. (See James 1:5-8.) With journaling, I can

receive in faith, knowing that when the flow has ended I can test and examine it carefully.

So I wrote down what I believed He had said: “She is insecure.”

But the Lord wasn't done. I continued to write the spontaneous thoughts that came to me: “Love her unconditionally. She is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone.”

My mind immediately objected: She is not flesh of my flesh. She is not related to me at all—she is a foster child, just living in my home temporarily. It was definitely time to test this “word from the Lord”!

There are three possible sources of thoughts in our minds: ourselves, satan and the Holy Spirit. It was obvious that the words in my journal did not come from my own mind—I certainly didn't see her as insecure or flesh of my flesh. And I sincerely doubted that satan would encourage me to love anyone unconditionally!

Okay, it was starting to look like I might have actually received counsel from the Lord. It was consistent with the names and character of God as revealed in the Scripture, and totally contrary to the names and character of the enemy. So that meant that I was hearing from the Lord, and He wanted me to see the situation in a different light. Rachel was my daughter—part of my family not by blood but by the hand of God Himself. The chaos of her birth home had created deep insecurity about her worthiness to be loved by anyone, including me and including God. Only the unconditional love of the Lord expressed through an imperfect human would reach her heart.

But there was still one more test I needed to perform before I would have absolute confidence that this was truly God's word to me: I needed confirmation from someone else whose spiritual

discernment I trusted. So I went to my wife and shared what I had received. I knew if I could get her validation, especially since she was the one most wronged in the situation, then I could say, at least to myself, “Thus sayeth the Lord.”

Needless to say, Patti immediately and without question confirmed that the Lord had spoken to me. My entire planned lecture was forgotten. I returned to my office anxious to hear more. As the Lord planted a new, supernatural love for Rachel within me, He showed me what to say and how to say it to not only address the current issue of household responsibility, but the deeper issues of love and acceptance and worthiness.

Rachel and her brother remained as part of our family for another two years, giving us many opportunities to demonstrate and teach about the Father’s love, planting spiritual seeds in thirsty soil. We weren’t perfect and we didn’t solve all of her issues, but because I had learned to listen to the Lord, we were able to avoid creating more brokenness and separation.

The four simple keys that the Lord showed me from Habakkuk have been used by people of all ages, from four to a hundred and four, from every continent, culture and denomination, to break through into intimate two-way conversations with their loving Father and dearest Friend. Omitting any one of the keys will prevent you from receiving all He wants to say to you. The order of the keys is not important, just that you *use them all*. Embracing all four, by faith, can change your life. Simply quiet yourself down, tune to spontaneity, look for vision, and journal. He is waiting to meet you there.

You will be amazed when you journal! Doubt may hinder you at first, but throw it off, reminding yourself that it is a biblical

concept, and that God is present, speaking to His children. Relax. When we cease our labors and enter His rest, God is free to flow (Heb. 4:10).

Why not try it for yourself, right now? Sit back comfortably, take out your pen and paper, and smile. Turn your attention toward the Lord in praise and worship, seeking His face. Many people have found the music and visionary prayer called “A Stroll Along the Sea of Galilee” helpful in getting them started. You can listen to it and download it free at CWGMinistries.org/Galilee.

After you write your question to Him, become still, fixing your gaze on Jesus. You will suddenly have a very good thought. Don't doubt it; simply write it down. Later, as you read your journaling, you, too, will be blessed to discover that you are indeed dialoguing with God. If you wonder if it is really the Lord speaking to you, share it with your spouse or a friend. Their input will encourage your faith and strengthen your commitment to spend time getting to know the Lover of your soul more intimately than you ever dreamed possible.

IS IT REALLY GOD?

Five ways to be sure what you're hearing is from Him:

1. Test the Origin (1 Jn. 4:1)

Thoughts from our own minds are constructed analytically, with one thought leading to the next, however tangentially. Thoughts from the spirit world are spontaneous. The Hebrew word for true prophecy is *naba*, which literally means to bubble up, whereas false prophecy is *ziyd* meaning to boil up. True words from the Lord will bubble up from our innermost being; we don't need to cook them up ourselves.

2. Compare It to Biblical Principles

God will never say something to you personally which is contrary to His universal revelation as expressed in the Scriptures. If the Bible clearly states that something is a sin, no amount of journaling can make it right. Much of what you journal about will not be specifically addressed in the Bible, however, so an understanding of biblical principles is also needed.

3. Compare It to the Names and Character of God as Revealed in the Bible

Anything God says to you will be in harmony with His essential nature. Journaling will help you get to *know* God personally, but knowing what the Bible says *about* Him will help you discern what words are from Him. Make sure the tenor of your journaling lines up with the character of God as described in the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

4. Test the Fruit (Matt. 7:15-20)

What effect does what you are hearing have on your soul and your spirit? Words from the Lord will quicken your faith and increase your love, peace and joy. They will stimulate a sense of humility within you as you become more aware of Who God is and who you are. On the other hand, any words you receive which cause you to fear or doubt, which bring you into confusion or anxiety, or which stroke your ego (especially if you hear something that is “just for you alone—no one else is worthy”) must be immediately rebuked and rejected as lies of the enemy.

5. Share It with Your Two or Three Spiritual Counselors (Prov. 11:14)

We are members of a Body! A cord of three strands is not easily broken and God's intention has always been for us to grow together. Nothing will increase your faith in your ability to hear from God like having it confirmed by two or three other people. Share it with your spouse, your parents, your friends, your elder, your group leader, even your grown children can be your sounding board. They don't need to be perfect or super-spiritual; they just need to love you, be committed to being available to you and maintaining confidentiality, have a solid biblical orientation, and most importantly, they must also willingly and easily receive counsel. Avoid the authoritarian who insists that because of their standing in the church or with God, they no longer need to listen to others. Find two or three people and let them confirm that you are hearing from God.

THREE JOURNALING QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO COMPLETE

1. Write a two-way love letter, where in paragraph one you share a reason why you love Jesus. Then fix your eyes on Jesus and tune to flow, and in paragraph two, let Him tell you how much He loves you.
2. Lord, show me the ways my earthly father demonstrated his love toward me.
3. Lord, You are my heavenly Father. Would you speak a **Father's blessing over me?** What do You have in store for my life? What is the destiny You have planned for me?

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I desire to hear Your blessing, Your purposes, and Your vision for my life. Thank You, Lord.

DIGGING DEEPER

How did your journaling time with Jesus go? Were you able to hear from Him in your heart? If you tried the four keys in this chapter and feel stuck in any area, don't give up. Please refer to Part Two of this book, "How to Hear God's Voice," and allow us to assist you in developing an intimate and conversational relationship with Jesus.

How can we receive counsel from our Wonderful Counselor if we cannot hear His voice? We see then how cultivating a two-way dialogue is absolutely *foundational* to receiving His counsel and His healing. We are convinced **heart healing occurs through divine encounter** and would love to share the journey to wholeness with you.