

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

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