

TODAY - THE PRESENT - THIS MOMENT

God wants me to be free from the burden of “unresolved issues” of the PAST or the FUTURE, allowing Him freedom to produce His fruit through my life.

PAST

- Are there issues from my past that need to be resolved?
- Do I need to forgive or reconcile with someone, or confess a wrong to someone?
- Do I need to make restitution for harm done? (physical, financial, etc.)
- Are there sins I need to confess to the Lord?

PRESENT

“Am I in fellowship with (“abiding with”) the Holy Spirit at this moment?”

IF NOT, WHY NOT?

FUTURE

- Are worries about the future disrupting my fellowship with the Lord?
- Do I need to acknowledge my worry or anxiety as sin?

1. ISSUES RELATED TO OTHERS - IN THE PAST, OR AT THIS MOMENT.

- a. If I think I can maintain good fellowship with God, and at the same time disregard relationships with others, I am deceiving myself.**

1 John 2:9-11 *The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates (see note) his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates (see note) his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

1 John 4:20-21 *If someone says, “I love God,” and hates (see note) his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.*

NOTE: “Love” is a choice “to do what is best for someone”. That is not necessarily the same as “doing what is pleasing to someone” (see also Heb. 12:6,11). I do not have to “feel affectionate” toward someone, but I do have to “love” them. Don’t think of “hate” as necessarily “malicious”, but rather as “not doing what is in someone’s best interest”. In other words, “the absence of love” or “not loving”.

- b. My unwillingness to forgive someone can limit my availability and usefulness to God, and can thus affect His fruit through my life.**

Mark 11:25 *“whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.*

Col. 3:12-13 *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*

c. Does the Holy Spirit want me to apologize to someone I have offended? It is my responsibility to pursue restoration of fellowship.

Matt. 5:23-24 “... if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

d. Does the Holy Spirit want me to pursue reconciliation with someone who has offended me? It is my responsibility to pursue restoration of fellowship.

Matthew 18:15 If your brother wrongs you, go and show him his fault, between you and him privately. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. (AMPNT)

e. Does the Holy Spirit want me to make restitution to someone whom I have caused loss? (Repay a debt? A loan? Taxes owed?)

Num. 5:5-7... the Lord spoke ... ‘When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, ... and that person is guilty, then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong ...
Rom. 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; ...

f. I am not responsible for someone else’s unwillingness to love or forgive me, but God does hold me accountable for loving and forgiving others.

Rom. 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
Rom. 12:16-18 ... Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
Rom. 12:20-21 “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
Phil. 2:1-4 ... do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

NOTE: Remember – “Love” is a choice “to do what is in someone’s best interest”.

2. PERSONAL ISSUES - JUST BETWEEN THE LORD AND MYSELF.

a. Is there an unresolved personal issue(s) that the Holy Spirit wants me to acknowledge and confess to Him?

1 John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

b. IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONTEMPLATE:

(1) ACCOUNTABILITY - Most Christians subconsciously reason that God leaves it in their hands to determine when there is a problem between them and God that needs to be resolved. That is wrong! I am **not** the one who decides for what I am being held accountable. The Holy Spirit **alone** makes that determination. In a parent-child relationship, the parent's responsibility is to **explain** to the child the nature of the problem. The child's responsibility is to **attentively listen** and **respond**.

(2) DISAGREEMENTS - When a husband and wife begin their marriage they have many differing opinions. Hopefully as they nurture their relationship many of those differences will diminish. Some will not. Some differences of opinion will remain until death. That is okay, we are each designed with a unique personality, and we should respect that difference in others. Do I really want everyone to think as I do? My goal should be to live in harmony (fellowship) with others, not to pressure everyone to hold my views. That is true of my spouse and my children as well as others.

I need to ask myself: Am I bothered by my spouse's (or other's) behavior, or views, because it's not the way "I" do things, or the way "I" think? Does God say their behavior or view is displeasing (sin) to Him? If I am bothered or offended by another's beliefs or behavior, yet God does not say it is sin, then I may need to examine my own heart. Maybe I'm judgmental. Maybe God is trying to show **me** an area He wants to change in **my** life. It is perfectly normal to hold different opinions and yet maintain mutual respect and fellowship.

(3) GROWTH - Having no unresolved issues for which I am being held accountable does **not** mean that everything I am now doing is pleasing to God. What does the concept of growth mean? We grow "**to**" something and "**from**" something. As we grow physically, we are advancing **from** a level of weakness **to** a level of increased physical capability. Likewise, as we grow spiritually, we are advancing from a level of reliance on **self** to a level of increasing reliance on **God**. I need to understand that spiritual strength is not what **I** can do, but rather what God is able to do through me. There is only one thing that hinders the Lord from using my life, unconfessed sin (anything that displeases the Lord) for which He is holding me accountable. The term "**growth**" implies then that there are things in my life today that are displeasing to the Lord, hence the need "to grow". Thankfully He does not hold me accountable for all that displeases Him. In fact, I am not even aware of all that He would like to change. If I am growing spiritually, I will become increasingly more sensitive to His voice. He wants me to learn to hear His whisper without having to shout at me.

We are all very familiar with the concept of growth, because it is the way we raise our children. For example, my 6-month old baby messes in his diaper. Am I shocked? Do I scold him or spank him? Do I find it pleasing that he ruined his diaper? Of course not! I know that he does not yet understand. However, if he does the same thing when he is 6 years old, it will be quite different. That is the same way the Holy Spirit trains me, except that He is more patient and gentle than we tend to be.

Again, what I need to remember is that the Holy Spirit is the **only One** who is able to determine what is displeasing to Him. He is not waiting for me to make those determinations. Do you expect your baby to tell you the rules by which he will live in harmony with you? That would be ridiculous. Neither does the Holy Spirit expect **me** to tell Him what is acceptable!

3. ISSUES RELATED TO THE FUTURE. GOD DOES NOT WANT ME TO BE WEIGHED DOWN BY EITHER THE PAST OR THE FUTURE.

- a. It is good to be “concerned” about the future, but concern can become worry, and worry can become anxiety. I need to be careful to not allow those emotions to become a pretext for not trusting in God’s care for me.

CONCERN ➡ WORRY ➡ ANXIETY ➡ PANIC

- b. It is okay to be concerned (wise, prudent) and to plan and prepare for the future. Paul’s “concern” for the welfare of the believers was correct.

2 Cor. 11:28-29 (Paul said) ... *there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?*
Prov. 10:5 *He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.*

- c. But I am told to “not worry” about the future. I should not regard that instruction as just a “suggestion”. Worry and anxiety about the future can be the evidence of an unwillingness to trust God, and can become sinful.

Matt. 6:31-34 “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ ... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, ...

- d. I can count on the Holy Spirit to faithfully and lovingly take care of my need.

Phil. 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
1 Peter 5:6-7 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

- e. I am told to “follow” Him, even though it is always tempting to “lead”. He wants me to allow Him to be intimately involved in all my future plans.

Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.
Luke 9:23-24 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. ...
James 4:13-17 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. ... Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” ...

