

Removing the Breach: Heart Evaluation

Taken from the book *Daring to Ask for More* by Melody Mason

It's easy to point fingers at others in condemnation, but what about the "breaches" in our own spiritual wall? What about the "beam" in our own eye? Are we the strong fortified Christians that God has called us to be?

Unfortunately the older and more experienced we become in ministry, the harder it often is to humble ourselves or acknowledge our weaknesses to one another or God. In the book *Pastoral Ministry*, we find the following:

"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 is 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 Him if there are any other breaches/beams that are hindering your walk with Him, things that may not be mentioned here.

After you've identified specific breaches (or "beams in your eye"), we encourage you to find specific Bible promises that you can claim for deliverance. We included some general promises here to claim (following the breaches mentioned) as you begin praying that God will help you remove the specific breach in your life.

Remember, God's Word is faithful, and He will give you deliverance and victory in these areas if you cling to Him in faith. He is able to save, even to the uttermost! (See Heb. 7:25)

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, or towards others and not made right. (See the following categories!)

- **Victory for those who Confess their sins** (see 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 God. 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.

- **Victory over Idols** (see Ezek 36:25-27, and 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. 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.* Nothing else should come between us and Him!

- **Victory over Addictions** (see Luke 18:27, and 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.

- **Victory over Ungodly Mindsets** (see Isa. 26:3, Ps. 119:165, and Phil. 4:8)

Ungodly Conversations: These breaches are also seldom addressed, yet they are quite prevalent, even in the lives of sincere 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, 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)

- **Victory over Ungodly Conversations** (see Isa. 6:5-7, and 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, stealing, back-stabbing, disrespecting those in authority, tearing down another’s character, wasting time, wasting money, wasting resources, 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. Of course, we cannot forget the sin of breaking God’s Ten Commandments!

- **Victory over Ungodly Behaviors** (see Rom. 12:18-21, and 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 could also fit in this category.

- **Victory over Ungodly Relationships** (see 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. Status, love of money, excessive love for temporal pleasures. God tells us, "Where our treasure is, there our heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21).

- **Victory over Worldly Preoccupations** (see Col. 3:1-3, and 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), consulting with palm readers, fortune tellers, horoscopes, being involved with hypnosis, séances, playing with Ouija boards, tarot cards, sporting emblems on our clothes of skulls and crossbones, or any activities of the occult world are completely off limits to professing followers of Christ. So also are movies or books featuring magic, spiritualism, mysticism, science fiction, witches, vampires, murder mysteries, and more. The Bible tells us that there is to be NO fellowship between light and darkness. If any of this darkness is part of our lives, not only do we have a serious breach, but our wall is in crumbles, and we must go running to Christ, pleading for Him to change us, if we hope to be saved.

- **Victory over Satanic Strongholds** (see 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, lack of self control, 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, and the list goes on and on.

- **Forgiveness for the Sins of Omission** (see 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).

Five 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.

4. Ask God to show you if anything else needs to be done about your specific sin. If your wrong doing affected someone else, it is possible that God may want you to go to them and make things right. 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 anger – then it typically is NOT an appropriate thing to confess those particular sins to the target of your wrong thoughts.

Remember though, that there isn’t a 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 willingly 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 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.**

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. These are things that God has promised to give us.

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).

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.