

# Leaving and Cleaving

## ***Breaking unhealthy soul-ties with parents***

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*Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

*(Genesis 2:24) KJV*

### **The Command**

This Scripture is the basis for an important principle regarding healthy relationships with parents. This is not a command to forsake loved ones, rebel against authority or dishonor our parents. Rather, this is a command to make room in your heart for healthy relationships with others, specifically your spouse. It is a requirement in order for healthy covenant relationships to be properly placed and positioned. This “leaving” pertains to much more than just moving out of the house. It includes any spiritual or emotional connection with a parent which has become binding (soul-tie), a preoccupation (idolatry) or become a barrier to bonding with your spouse or immediate family member (improper order in relationships).

### **God’s Intention**

There is certainly a *healthy* bond between children and their parents which God intends. Parents are exhorted to reflect the heart of a Heavenly Father who loves and cares for His children with an unconditional love.

*“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:5-9 NIV).*

The greatest gift a parent can give their child is to raise them to love the Lord their God with everything they have. Their job is to point their children to Jesus Christ as the One and Only true source of life, joy, happiness, direction and purpose. Even if behaviors seem disappointing, the goal should always be to nurture the heart to be pure and passionate for the Lord. This nurture and direction are necessary to build a proper foundation for any son or daughter to grow up. As a parent instructs their child to build a personal relationship with Christ, they are preparing their child to be spiritually and emotionally stable, able to grow without the dependency of parental oversight.

### **The Transition**

At some point during the young adult years the parent-child relationship changes. It’s when the child begins to take responsibility for his or her own life that the relationship should begin to shift as the son or daughter now begins to look to the Lord for their primary care. Though they are still under the spiritual authority of their parents until their own home is established, the *immediate need* for attention and care will not be sought out as before. The adult child will, hopefully, have grown to receive their primary emotional needs from the Lord, as well as learned to establish other trusted relationships beyond their parents. Just as a child needs physical weaning from their mother, so should an adult child be weaned of their mother and father’s *emotional feeding*. *“But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.” (Psalm 131:2)*

A mature relationship between parent and adult child will be one of mutual respect and affection with an open heart and hand. The sharing of spiritual matters is freely given and freely received without obligation or constraint. There is no manipulation or control, but a freedom as sons and daughters of the King. Direction and

counsel are given knowing that each is free to follow the Father's will and direction, even if it differs from their own. Agape love, as modeled by Christ, leaves one another with the freedom to choose.

### **The Challenge**

This is hardest on the parent. The role of a parent is that of a steward to adequately prepare sons and daughters to be children of their Heavenly Father. The only way for this to work is if both parent and child are secure in the love of Christ. Each must know that their identity and ultimate security and safety are in Him. Parents must not look for significance in their role as parents nor are they to hold on to their children in order to feel loved or validated. When the formative years are finished, the training phase is done. Just as the child grows up, the parent must release their son or daughter to walk on their own.

What this looks like will differ from relationship to relationship. The measure of spiritual or emotional distance must rest with the child, first. They are the ones "leaving the nest" and must have the freedom to do so. They should not feel coerced or cajoled into feeling ungrateful as they learn to fly on their own. This will require a parent to "let go" and let the Holy Spirit become their adult child's teacher, coach and counselor. The power of a praying parent can be powerful and effective as they recognize that God is even more zealous for their child's well-being than they are.

In cases where either parent or child is single, this becomes even more difficult as the need for emotional closeness is even greater. However, one does not have to sacrifice the healthy bond between parent and child during this season. It simply means having proper boundaries in place to prevent any co-dependence on either party.

### **The Definition of "Soul Tie"**

A soul tie is a "*cleaving together*", a relationship whereby two souls are joined or knitted together, first emotionally and sometimes, sexually. It is a joining of hearts and wills where the two people are bound together in kinship or affection. A soul-tie will bind one person to another, whether for good or for bad. Thus, there are healthy (godly) soul-ties and unhealthy (ungodly) soul ties.

Though this term is never used in the Bible, there are examples of binding relationships. In 1 Samuel 18:2, we read that "*Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.*" This friendship between two best friends was very deep. David & Jonathan made a pact together out of their mutual love for God. Though they should have been rivals, they rose above the family pressures to affirm their desire to uphold God's laws for the sake of their families. The significance of this bond affected generations to come, assuring that Messiah would come through David's line. This was a godly soul-tie that didn't conflict with their covenant with the Lord, but actually served to uphold it.

Another reference to a soul being "bound" is in Genesis 44:30-31. We read of Jacob's relationship with his son, Benjamin - "*So now, if the boy is not with us when I go back to your servant my father, and if my father, whose life is closely bound up with the boy's life, sees that the boy isn't there, he will die.*" This example demonstrates the danger of an unhealthy soul-tie. This is not selfless love, but a bound-up love that depends on the happiness of another for one's own personal well-being. Though this relationship had its origins in a godly soul-tie, it went beyond healthy boundaries in that Jacob's soul became so preoccupied and worried about his youngest son that he wouldn't want to live if something happened to him. Instead of resting and trusting in God's protection for his favored son, he walked in fear and anxiety regarding the boys' well-being. It bound him up.

### **Co-Dependence**

"*Co-dependence*" is a term that can also apply in some cases. This kind of relationship denotes an unhealthy dependence upon another person for security, validation and emotional stability. In this case, *both* persons

are *dependent* on each other and focus the majority of their emotional energy on what will make the other person happy or content, even at risk or harm to themselves. It actually becomes a form of addiction. A co-dependent person is addicted, not to a destructive substance, but a destructive pattern of relating to other people's behaviors, moods or opinions. A co-dependent person bases his or her worth and actions on someone else's life. It is compulsive, habitual and brings one into emotional, spiritual and even physical bondage.

Soul ties don't necessarily affect both parties the same way, but in a co-dependent relationship, both parties are equally bound up in one another's life and unable to break free from the stronghold.

### **The Symptoms**

If you are caught in a soul-tie or co-dependent relationship, you may experience any or all of the following:

- A strong emotional pull towards a person with a constant desire to be with them or talk with them.
- A preoccupation with their thoughts and attitudes.
- A compulsion to try and please them.
- A tendency to be strongly influenced by them in most decisions, even if it goes against your own instincts or personal preference.
- A major portion of your time being given to them.
- A feeling of rejection if this person gets upset or isn't happy with you.
- A fear of the relationship ending.
- Defensiveness if someone else suggests the relationship is not healthy.
- An extreme need to take care of the other person.
- Feelings of guilt if you do not give the other person enough attention.

Other signals that things are unhealthy:

- Other significant relationships suffer due to amount of energy focused on the other person.
- Financial dependence on or of the other person.
- Anger or even rage exhibited when the relationship is threatened.

As with any other addiction, the symptoms will be more obvious to others and you will deny there's any problem. However, it is only when the problem is acknowledged that any help can be given.

### **God's Order of Relationships**

A godly soul tie will be in accordance with God's principles and priorities based on the foundation of covenant relationship. There is a divine order that God has intended for relationships which will bring the greatest peace and greatest blessing. This is an ordering of our hearts and emotional and spiritual energies that will be directed in the right places for the right reasons.

First is our relationship to God. As followers of Christ, our first allegiance, attention and affection should be towards Him. Without it, all other relationships will be lacking and will suffer. It is from Him that we live, love and walk out our faith. We are commanded to "*Love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.*" (Joshua 22:5)

Second is our relationship to our spouse. If we have truly "left" mother and father, we will "cleave" to and focus our hearts towards our spouse. The covenant we made is spiritually binding. Our spouse should be given priority in things of the heart, personal affairs, affection and time spent. No one else – even a mother – should take the place of a spouse. If any other relationship threatens the well-being or continued growth of the marriage, we are bound to put the marriage first. "*So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.*" (Matthew 19:6)

Next is our relationship to our children, then to others in the Body of Christ (including siblings). Regardless of one's marital status, the order and priority is the same. The principle is that of relating to others from a covenantal position of blessing and favor. When these relationships are kept in proper order, we will receive God's grace and blessing to grow, mature and be enriched. When these priorities are NOT kept in order, conflicts will arise, peace will leave and the blessings of God will be stifled. This is because we are living in disobedience to His Word and will.

Most often, an unhealthy soul-tie elevates another person above your relationship and commitment to God. The elevation to this prominent place can turn into idolatry which is a serious offense. *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."* (Matthew 10:37-39) Of course, we will always justify the relationship out of our love FOR God and for the other person, when in reality the relationship is usually based on fear and need. It is our fear that our needs won't be met, that drives us to look outside of God's plan for fulfillment. There may also be fear of rejection or the fear of what will happen to the other person if we cut the ties. It is also our need for immediate relief that causes us to put off or postpone any needed change because of the perceived comfort we receive from the relationship.

### **The Deception**

The enemy's goal is to blind us to these truths so that we will look to people to meet our needs instead of God. The imbedded lie is that *God just isn't enough*. We believe that God can't meet those deepest needs...probably doesn't even really understand them! Satan will see to it that circumstances and conversations confirm these lies and it will take a willing and desperate heart to reach into the light for revelation of God's heart and love to break free from this curse.

The other deception is that *God needs us to help someone*. Whether a family member or close friend, we believe that we are the answer – the Savior – the source for security, love, affection, financial security, etc. It is a veiled lie that is cushioned behind the biblical admonition to care for those who are hurting or in need. If the soul tie is between two Christians the deception can be even greater. It will often be defended by quoting Scripture and believing the relationship is giving needed strength or counsel. The problem is that the relationship with the Lord often gets put on the back seat and traded for the comfort of living flesh. Instead of pressing into prayer, seeking His Word and reaching out to others He may place in one's path, we limit ourselves to *that one person* we believe truly knows us and can help us. This kind of idolatry not only displeases the Lord, but it will bring deception, confusion and begin to open doors to the enemy to rob us of spiritual integrity and stability. Though we are commanded to love and care for one another, it should never be at the expense of our covenant relationships with the Lord or our spouse.

If we are to live with God's blessing, we must take the same attitude that Jesus took. Jesus determined that he would be directed and controlled only by His Heavenly Father and no one else. *"I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."* (John 8:28-29) We cannot be obedient to God's command to serve Him with ALL our soul if our souls are bound up by another.

### **What About Family?**

In 1 Timothy 5:7-8, we are told *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."* The context for this verse is that of taking care of widows in the church. Thought this command is to be taken seriously, it is not meant to be a blank check for every needy family member. Notice the verses *before* and *after* this one.

(Verse 5) *“The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.”* (Verses 9-10) *“No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, 10 and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.”*

Verse 5 indicates that a widow (parent) who is really in need is going to exhibit FIRST a dependence on the Lord for all her needs. She will not obligate family members or lay guilt trips on them for not providing because her hope is in God. The implication is that she is not given to fear or anxiousness because she is resting in God to meet her most important needs. Verses 9 and 10 go even further to state that to even be considered for getting on the “help list” the widow must demonstrate a godly life of integrity and generosity with others, not given to greed, need or a victim mentality. She must have lived faithfully in her marriage and given to serving others. It was understood that before any family member provide assistance, the widow must have already lived a life of selflessness.

This principle could be applied to other family members who are given to co-dependency. Though we are always to love and support them spiritually, we must also use discretion if asked to give beyond our means, not only financially, but emotionally. If we start giving more time and attention to needy family members than to our own spouse or children, we have crossed the line. We are only enabling an unhealthy soul-tie to continue and the umbilical cord must be cut. This does not mean that we don’t provide for them, but only as the Lord directs. *“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

### **The Root**

Co-dependent behavior and ungodly soul-ties usually start in childhood when a child’s emotional needs are not met. When basic emotional needs of love, affirmation, affection and protection are absent or abused, there is an emotional hole or void in the child’s heart. If a child’s identity is not secured in a healthy way in the early years, unconsciously, the child will grow up “looking for love in all the wrong places”! The need will be so strong that even unhealthy relationships will do if there is a felt-need being met (acceptance, love, attention, affection, security, etc.). If the need is strong enough, a person will put up with emotional or even physical abuse if they believe the other person will somehow fill that void in their heart.

The trap is that this destructive pattern becomes a defense and wall that hinders the love of God to be fully manifested in the wounded person’s life. Thus, the only way to be free is to acknowledge the ungodly soul-tie for what it is and break its unhealthy hold. Thus, by *leaving* this kind of relationship one can then begin to properly *cleave* to God and those that He has put in our lives to be healthy agents of His love.

### **The Lie Grows**

Left unhealed, when areas of unmet need are experienced later in life, a “trigger” will go off and the emotional wound will re-open. The same feelings will surface and emotions will be reactionary and out of proportion to reality (a seemingly small thing will cause a huge reaction). Childish thought patterns and behaviors will be displayed as a result of unhealed emotional wounds. Until the wounded child sees the truth and finds healing in Jesus, the cycle will continue and the power of the lie will increase. *“But, I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!* (Romans 7:23-25)

Not all lies will manifest in the same way. Where some will experience emotional turmoil and confusion, others will simply become numb to the truth and blindly follow the lie out of obligation. In cases where an adult child feels responsible for a parent, their feelings may not be affected as much as their beliefs. They

begin to believe they are doing what is right, even though it is costing them intimacy in their marriage or peace in their homes. They believe their sacrifices are honorable when, in fact, are destructive patterns robbing their own homes of God's rule and protection.

Regardless of how the lie looks, it must be recognized for what it is. Whether caring for a needy parent or a manipulative one, an adult child must make the decision to step away from the stronghold and take responsibility for his or her own choices. Jesus Christ is the ONLY One who can truly meet all our needs. The adult child must not only step away, but repent for their ungodly belief that they are *helping* or *saving* their parent through their destructive thoughts and actions. Others may need to repent for looking to their parent more than looking to the Lord for help. In either case, the relationship has been out of order.

### **The Responsible Son**

"Fred" was the oldest son of a prominent lawyer. Though his family was close-knit, it was also highly dysfunctional with numerous addictions, broken relationships and a deep distrust of other people. As a result, Fred was very protective of his aging mother. When his mother was diagnosed with a fatal disease, Fred was at her bedside non-stop...for months. Even though other siblings were there to provide care, Fred basically lived with his mother to make sure she was OK. The problem was that his wife and 2 children were at their own home – alone. Because of Fred's sense of responsibility to his mother – a co-dependent one - he put his own family second and within weeks, estranged himself from his wife and children.

His wife was patient but dying on the inside. At any call for help, Fred would run to his mother's house and leave his own family right in the middle of a meal. He was convinced that his mother needed him more than his wife and children. This went on for several months and the marriage relationship was sacrificed for familial strongholds. What Fred didn't realize was that he was acting out of an unmet childhood need for his mother's approval. She was not an affectionate woman and didn't compliment her son much. Now, in later years, there was an unconscious hope that he could earn her validation and praise through his "selfless" acts of love. Unfortunately, it never came and after all of Fred's attempts, he was still left empty. He was too bound up with his mother to see the wife who truly loved him and wanted to reach into his wounded heart to bring the affection and attention he so desired.

This is a common pattern among families that goes on unnecessarily. Relationships become strained and tempers flare because of misdirected time and attention. Fred did not have to sacrifice his own family to care for his mother. In most cases like this, the one "needing the help" is usually not as needy as supposed. Even in cases where the need is real, there are usually others to help carry the load. The point is that our love must be properly placed underneath God's protective shield trusting that He can do His job quite well at watching over His children and that we must only do what HE tells us to do, nothing more.

### **My Own Story**

I personally know the power of ungodly soul ties with parents. I had one with my father. It held me captive for years, even into my marriage, until a crisis hit that forced me to deal with the deeply rooted stronghold.

My dad had very high expectations of me regarding my gifts of music. He, too, was a musician and music teacher. From an early age, he expected me to sing or play in church, even when I wasn't ready. He paraded me in front of his friends and constantly forced me to play the violin or piano for anyone who would listen. I resented it and was greatly embarrassed. I was a shy person and didn't want to show off. He, on the other hand, was very proud and insisted on my demonstrations of talent to build his own reputation in our small church community.

This manipulation continued into my young adult years as he would use Scriptures to convince me of my selfishness if I didn't play for him, minister with him (he was a pastor) or pray with him. He saw my call to ministry and wanted to cash in on my anointing since his own was lacking. He needed my gifts in order to feel important. What I needed from him was acceptance and approval. So, I would try, as best I could, to fulfill his requests and give in to his demands. It never brought life, however, and I was often left empty and felt used.

I also felt guilty. I saw past his spiritual boasting and saw the emotional wounds of a small boy left at an orphanage by his divorced mother. Those wounds never healed in my dad and he spent all his life trying to fill those voids of rejection through his own gifts of music and evangelism. I felt sorry for him and actually felt a kinship with him because of the creative and artistic temperament we shared. I loved him one minute and hated him the next. His emotional abuse would escalate into rage at times and it created a constant fear in our household. I actually gave in to the ungodly belief that my purpose was to be like David the psalmist and minister to my dad through my music to quell the demons within.

Unfortunately, deliverance never came. Instead, he began to put himself between me and my husband, pointing out to me Bobby's weaknesses and shortcomings as a husband. He would try to convince me, through Scriptures, that I was obligated to him as my father and must honor his advice and counsel – even above my own husband. He didn't think Bobby really understood me like *he* did. Though I could see through it, it still played havoc with my emotions and the soul-tie that was in effect caused me to battle the same demons he had. I constantly fought feelings of rejection, fear and worry. Though I tried to change my patterns and just *think* differently and *act* differently, I finally realized I needed actual deliverance. This was a destructive co-dependent relationship that needed to end.

It was at the same time that a family crisis happened that forced me to make a choice. After seeking the Lord together, both Bobby and I were in agreement. We knew the Lord was telling me to stop all contact with my parents for 6 months in order for me to get free. Though my mother was not part of my dysfunction, she was in the beginning stages of Alzheimer's and we knew she wouldn't understand the separation but we trusted the Lord to take care of her. It would take this kind of dramatic intervention to be totally free of this familiar spirit. Even though we lived in separate cities, I knew the fallout would be hard. My father lived in the same community we pastored for years and we knew all the same people. He would end up spreading his anger and frustration to others through misleading reports and rumors that made us look immature and spiritually deceived. Even so, we knew the Lord was giving us grace for the season and that the fruit would outweigh the cost. We lovingly told them that we needed to step away for a while but that we loved them and would contact them after a few months. Though my dad fought us at first, he eventually saw our resolve and relented. It was not easy, but God prepared the way.

Through the next six months, the Lord took me through intense inner healing and deliverance like I had never expected. Though I had tried to pray through the issue as an adult, it was only until the *inner child* within was touched that deliverance finally came. It was in those early years of my life when I didn't understand or know what was happening, that the enemy took a foothold. It was there that the Lord was waiting to bring healing and freedom. Though this is certainly not what it takes for everyone to get free of a soul-tie, my own co-dependence also resulted in bondage to a Religious Spirit and other strongholds that were all intertwined. The Lord has specific reasons for taking me through this extended season of freedom.

Through this time the Holy Spirit was an amazing teacher who revealed many truths that not only set me free, but enabled me to help others. This is the reason I am passionate about seeing others set free. After about six months of healing, deliverance and renewing my mind and emotions, I contacted my dad. By this time, I was a different person. By the grace of God, so was he. The Lord's work was so complete, I no longer related to my dad as his daughter, but as a peer. Though I continued to *honor* him as my father, I didn't feel the obligation to

*obey* him anymore. Because the strings were cut and my own wounds were healed, I didn't get pulled in to his tactics of guilt or shame. Instead, I stood up to him and drew the line when he began to question the authority of my husband. I knew that there times when I was actually speaking to the *demonic influence within him* rather than to him. I knew my battle was not with flesh and blood, but the enemy of my soul who wanted to keep me in bondage.

In subsequent months, my relationship with my father would change in amazing ways. He saw the changes and began to respect me. The pull was no longer there. The need to satisfy or answer him was gone. I had the strength to say "no" when needed and was able to speak up when something needed to be said. I was no longer the little girl looking for daddy's approval. I was a grown woman relating to a brother in Christ who also happened to raise me. Though he would never know what happened during those six months, he too, saw the change. My love for him actually grew. It wasn't a *needy* love, but a love that was unconditional and free. There were no strings attached, so I could give without keeping score. I didn't worry about what he thought or said. I knew who my Father was and rested in what HE said about me, regardless of what my earthly dad said.

My marriage changed, as well. Though Bobby was very gracious through the early years, I never realized how my preoccupation with my dad came between us. I was often on an emotional roller-coaster after getting one of my dad's famous emails full of accusations and threats, all couched in spiritual terms. It would affect my decision-making process and even affected our intimacy as husband and wife. My emotions had been bound up.

Now, I was free to give to Bobby both emotionally and spiritually without being sidelined by dad. Bobby was extremely supportive through the whole process and often stood in the gap for me, both in prayer as well as at the computer answering those emails! He never wavered in his support and became the spiritual covering I needed, praying with me through some of the most intense sessions.

I have faith and absolute confidence that freedom is available to anyone who is willing to go through the process. It's not easy and takes time to walk it out, but God provides the grace if you say "yes". Though soul-ties can be between any two people, I have found that the ungodly soul ties with our parents are pivotal and foundational in our spiritual growth and health. They deal with ROOT issues that must be addressed if we are to walk in spiritual health and integrity. If we understand the principles involved, we can apply them to other relationships needing healing, as well.



## How to Get Free

As stated, recognizing the problem and acknowledging the ungodly soul ties with our parents is the first step. Next, we have to decide whether or not we are willing to do what it takes to get free. It will not happen overnight or in one counseling or prayer session. This is a life-long pattern of addiction that not only needs to be broken, but totally transformed into godly habits of relating to our parents that will take time and practice.

*“Suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:31-33)*

There WILL be a cost to this decision. It will cost you time, energy, and sacrifice. It may cost you some other relationships and maybe even your reputation (at least in some people’s minds). But, just as the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:8, *“I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.”* If you keep your eyes fixed on the goal of freedom in Christ and healthier relationships all around, you will have the proper motivation that will be required.

### **Making the Break**

Depending on the severity of the soul-tie or codependency, the relationship may need to be entirely severed for a time period, such as was my own case. For others, it may be only a month or two or perhaps a few weeks. It will basically be determined by one’s level of grace, support and ability to say “no” when needed. The reality is that very few people are able to get free without some sort of distance or separation. The temptation is usually too strong. This is an *addiction* and the reality must be faced that unless there is some immediate and dramatic changes, the temptations will be too strong and the cycle will continue. In some cases, a total break may not be feasible, such as with a live-in parent. In those cases, specific boundaries must be put in place to break the patterns of relating that are unhealthy. God knows each situation and will give the needed wisdom and the way through it.

An extremely vital and necessary component in this process will be strong emotional and spiritual support from healthy family members. This may be actual biological family members, but will hopefully also include spiritual brothers and sisters who can support you in prayer and counsel. Seeing this process as a positive means to draw closer to them in a meaningful way will help keep the focus where it should be. Rather than trying to *stop* doing the *wrong thing*, you want to *start* doing the *right thing*. Purpose to use the time that would normally be given to the co-dependent relationship, to focus attention on the ones that have been lacking. This may be more time seeking the Lord in prayer and devotion. It may be more time with your spouse or children. It may be taking the time and initiative to finally get out of your comfort zone to meet new people and create new bonds of friendship that God has been waiting for you to pursue. In any case, this journey is a GOOD one! Whatever you think you’re losing will only be replaced by something much better if you don’t give up or give in.

### **Know WHOSE You Are**

One of the bi-products of an ungodly soul-tie with our parent is that we feel orphaned. Though we obviously have a parent who is very much with us in the flesh, this has nothing to do with a parent being physically present. This has to do with what we think of ourselves. When the inner child is wounded, abused or abandoned, either physically or emotionally, it plants a seed – a lie – that tells that child they are alone. That wounded child did not receive the security and stability of a loving parent or the love and affection they needed. Those unmet needs create lies within us that war against our position as children of a Heavenly

Father. This kind of thinking comes from an orphan mentality or orphan spirit. It cannot be cast out. It must be transformed by the unconditional love of the Heavenly Father. The following symptoms of the orphan spirit are taken from Dr. Basil Frasure's ministry (Whole Person Counseling) at [www.wholeperson-counseling.org](http://www.wholeperson-counseling.org)

1. Hoarding : possessions, time, position, relations.	12. Worried about tomorrow and the future.
2. Wishing you had more (envy and greed).	13. Performance oriented.
3. Jealousy of what others have.	14. Any fellowship with God is unstable.
4. Always fighting for your rights.	15. Can't take criticism.
5. Fearful of God's wrath.	16. Lonely and feel isolated.
6. Seeing God as being harsh or cruel.	17. Feel like God is unfair.
7. Always defensive.	18. Depressed and see no way out.
8. Feel like you are on the outside looking end.	19. Critical of parented and loved children.
9. Confused about who you are.	20. Feel unworthy to ask God for anything.
10. Feel neglected by God and the church.	21. Have difficulty receiving and giving love.
11. Fearful of what others may see in you.	22. Not relationship oriented.

If we carry any of these are thoughts or attitudes on a consistent basis, we need to dig deeper to consider the source. God's Word is very clear about who we are and WHOSE we are. Regardless of our lineage or parental examples, we are first and foremost, children of God who have been adopted into His kingdom through His Son, Jesus Christ. Our ultimate security and identity rests in that truth, regardless of our experiences.

The orphan mentality feeds us lies. It tells us *"You're not worth it", "I'm not good enough", "I'm bad/dirty", "No one will ever understand", "I can't trust anyone in authority", "All men are abusers"...*and the list goes on. It's important to identify the lies we believe so that we can convert them! Yes, that's right! We must take captive those ungodly beliefs and shed God's truth on them. When those lies sound in our ears, we must be ready to declare the truth of how God sees us and not continue to let the lie rule our thoughts and actions.

Most often, the parent we are dependent upon has already disappointed us, or worse, hurt or abused us. This is the unfortunate cycle of abuse. A child who is abused grows up to be an abuser and the pattern continues until someone gets off the roller-coaster. This is one of the reasons that freedom must always begin with forgiveness. Once we get in touch with our true feelings of sadness and anger, we are confronted with our own sin of unforgiveness and we must repent of it to go any further.

This is not just a glib statement of resolution. It must be a decision of the heart whereby the offended is truly ready to release the offender and let them off their hook. They are not off God's hook. Any sin that was committed by an abusive parent will be dealt with by a just God. But, He cannot do His part until we do ours. *"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."* (Mark 11:25)

## **Prayer of Repentance and Forgiveness**

The first position we must take in this process is one of humility. Though we may feel justified in our anger, our hurt and our frustration, we must let go of our control. God cannot intervene until we give Him full control, and that means releasing our anger, bitterness and urge to fight back. This may not be easy in some cases and may even take some time to let the reality sink in. But, we must begin here.

The first prayer is that of repentance. We must take responsibility for our own choices. We have given in. We have taken control on our own. We have not allowed God to be Lord of all. It's time to set things right:

### **Prayer of Repentance:**

Father, I thank you for your truth that sets me free. I thank you for shining your light into my heart and showing me the ungodly soul-tie I have with ("Mom"/"Dad"). I thank you that you love me enough to not let me continue in this cycle of co-dependency with ("Mom"/"Dad"). Please forgive me for being disobedient to Your Word by placing my relationship with ("Mom"/"Dad") above you. Forgive me for putting more time and attention in that relationship than with You. Forgive my willfulness and stubbornness in hanging on. Forgive me for justifying my actions and shifting the blame. I acknowledge that I have not walked in your truth and have held on to my childish thought patterns and behaviors. Forgive me for not listening to You when you have spoken before. I will not put this off any longer.

I willingly cut this spiritual and emotional umbilical cord with my Mom/Dad so that I can be free to grow and mature as you lead me. Though I honor them and love them as the parents You gave me, I choose to walk forward as a grown son/daughter of Yours. I desire to grow up with You as the most important person in my life.

I submit my mind, will, and emotions to Your Spirit to teach me what is needed to continue to mature and deepen my walk with you and others. I submit to your Lordship and choose to walk in obedience from now on regarding this relationship. I choose to follow your direction and your will concerning how this relationship looks in the future. Please cleanse my thoughts, my heart and my will so that I might be fully devoted to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **You are a Son and Daughter of your Heavenly Father**

Psalm 27:10 – *"Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me."*

John 14:16-18 – *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."*

Romans 8:15-17 – *"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."*

1 John 4:19-20 – *"We love because he first loved us."*

Galatians 4:4-7 – *"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'" So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."*