SPIRITUAL LIFE
A JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS AND RESTORATION

WHO IS ON THE THRONE OF MY LIFE?
We start our journey together with some questions:

- Is Jesus truly Lord of every area of my life?
- Does my life-style honour God?
- Am I obedient irrespective of circumstances?
- Am I surrendered to Jesus voluntarily and unconditionally?

NOT MY WILL BUT YOUR WILL BE DONE
One of the reasons people experience problems in their lives is because they continue to live after salvation by the same rules as before. Once a person has an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ there should be a change in their lives, often this does not happen because we are stubborn and we have not fully submitted to God.

Jesus showed us what submission looks like. In Luke 22: 39 - 46 He expressed His true feelings. Vs. 42 ‘Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will but Yours be done’. Vs. 43 ‘An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him.’ Vs. 44 and being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.’ (Anguish - extreme pain or misery, mental or physical torment.)

Submission means obedience, right attitude, taking responsibility and complete trust.

The first step in our Journey to Wholeness must be a willingness to be fully surrendered and submitted to the will of God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND COVERING
Authority is not a popular word these days. There are many Christians today who are not under any authority and when the day of trouble comes, they will be found wandering like sheep without a shepherd. They will be prey for the enemy. By fearing or rejecting authority we lose sight of the protection and benefits authority provides. Outside of authority, there is no protection. When we submit to Spiritual Authority we seal out the enemy, it is our spiritual umbrella of protection. When we fall, Godly Leadership will stand by us because they believe we are worth saving.

The primary purpose of authority is to set boundaries for our lives. God put authority in our lives to bless us not to hinder us. The blessing of God upon our lives is dependent upon our attitude towards authority. It is not dependent upon the character, conduct or ability of those in authority over us.

God expects Church Leaders to give a report on the flock that He has placed in their care – let us not make their task any more difficult. Hebrews 13:17 – ‘Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you’.

Romans 13: 1-5 – makes it very clear that when we rebel against our Leaders, we are rebelling against God Himself, and we will bring judgment on ourselves. When we slander or speak
negatively about our Leaders we bring a curse on our lives. Psalm 105.15 – ‘Do not touch My anointed ones, do My Prophets no harm.’ In Numbers 12 we read the story of how Miriam and Aaron spoke out against Moses. In verse 8 God asked Miriam and Aaron ‘why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?’ verse 9 says ‘The anger of the Lord burned against them and He left them.’ When the Lord left they saw that Miriam had leprosy, she was in disgrace and sent outside of the camp for seven days. The whole tribe of Israel could not move forward for seven days waiting for Miriam to serve her sentence! In the same way, we can hold back progress in the House of God by speaking against the Lord’s Servants.

FORGIVENESS – THE KEY TO YOUR HEALING
Unforgiveness is a spiritual problem. It is not a spirit. It’s the inability or unwillingness to let go of hurt and pain – it’s a heart attitude

Unforgiveness puts a veil between us and God and it is legal ground for the enemy. You are controlled by the other person.

Forgiving means stepping away from our natural desire to punish our enemy, and handing him over to God to allow Him to work in their lives. Jesus said ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ When they stoned Stephen the first martyr he said: ‘Lord lay not this sin to their charge.’ Forgiveness is cancelling the debt and setting the other person free, not asking God to punish them.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT!
- Not simply forgetting but choosing to move our focus on to other things.
- It is not based on feelings – its obedience. Acting first exercises the will. Emotions will follow.
- It is not earned. ‘I’ll forgive you when ...’ it is unconditional.
- It does not mean the other person was right. Forgiveness is not to surrender the truth.
- It does not mean the pain goes away instantly. One may still experience emotional pain. But the sting will go.
- It does not mean the other person controls. In fact, the opposite is true.

Forgiveness is not a negotiable point – it is a command. If we do not forgive we will not be forgiven. Matthew 18: 23 – 35 - the parable of the unmerciful servant whose master forgave him for a huge outstanding debt, yet he refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him a small debt, says in verse 34 ‘In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. Verse 35 ‘this is how my Heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.’ Very clear – if we refuse to forgive, God will release us to the tormentors.

Learn to separate people from their behaviour. People are not the enemy – the devil is! We are not what we do.
Revenge is natural – undeserved kindness is supernatural.
UNDERSTANDING WHY YOU FEEL THE WAY YOU DO.

1 Thessalonians 5:23. Man is a three part being. He is made up of body, soul and spirit. All these areas are interrelated and function together. Each area will affect the others.

THE BODY - the physical part of man - The body is yet to be saved. We need to keep an eye on our body, because it likes to have its own way! Problems in the physical area are often the direct result of living for a long time with destructive emotions such as anger, guilt, depression, unforgiveness, fear and anxiety to name a few.

THE SPIRIT - the core of who we are was created to be in relationship with God. The primary function of the Human Spirit is to receive the Life of God from the Holy Spirit. That life is then communicated to our bodies and our souls. Through trauma, hurt and inappropriate burden bearing our human spirits can be wounded, thereby keeping us trapped in our pain.

THE SOUL - the psychological part of man - Consists of the mind, the will and the emotions.

THE MIND: processes information, it stores facts, events and memories. It files away everything that enters through the five senses. Problems are caused by ‘foolish thinking’ – thinking we can live without God, meet our own needs without Him.

THE WILL: That part of man which enables him to make choices. Problems arise in this area because the choices we make are often as a result of our deep unmet needs and distorted thinking. We are trying in our own strength to satisfy our longings.

THE EMOTIONS: We all have the capacity to feel. Emotions should be felt, they should be acknowledged and understood, they should not be ignored. Emotions tell us a lot about ourselves.

EVERYTHING STARTS WITH A THOUGHT!
No behaviour happens by chance. We are in a war? Everywhere we look we see the casualties. Every day we see people falling for all sorts of reasons. We don’t realise that although it seems we are losing the war in the physical against all the evil we see around us, it’s because we are in reality losing the earlier more important battle which is going on in our minds.

THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION
The limbic system is the connection between your brain and the hypothalamus gland. Everything that concerns thought travels down that connection. The hypothalamus gland is the facilitator and the originator of all expressions of emotion. All emotions are released and facilitated by this one gland. It will only produce what is happening in the deep recesses of your soul and your spirit.

WHAT ARE WE FEEDING OUR MINDS?
An honest assessment of what is entering our minds is essential. What books are we reading, what music are we listening to, and what are we watching on TV? Colossians 3:12 says we have the mind of Christ. If we believe that verse, how then can we freely pollute our minds? Hebrews 8:10 encourages us to put the Word of God into our minds and Philippians 4:8 encourages us to think on that which is noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. That is not possible if we fill our minds with those things that are not of God.

CHANGE YOUR THINKING – CHANGE YOUR LIFE ....
What goes on in our minds is our responsibility. We have to do something about it!

2 Corinthians 10:5 ‘we demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.’

Deuteronomy 1:2: ‘it is only eleven days journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-Barnea (on Canaan’s border; yet Israel took forty years to get beyond it)’. We really shouldn't look at the Israelites in astonishment, because most of us do the same thing they did. We keep going around and around the same mountains without making any progress. The result is it takes us years to experience victory over something that could have and should have been dealt with quickly.

RIGHT ACTION FOLLOWS RIGHT THINKING

CHALLENGE:

Prepare your hearts for our Journey to Wholeness and Restoration by:

- Asking yourself – who is Jesus to me really? If He is not Lord of every Area of your life – what are you going to do to change that?
- Choosing to submit your will to the will of the Father.
- Obey your Spiritual Leaders – make their task a joy and not a burden.
- Choose to forgive all those who have hurt you – including yourself!
- Actively work on renewing your mind.