Breaking Agreement With Lies We Believe About God

A simple listening prayer exercise, grounded in Scripture

> *"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." John 8:32*

What we have experienced in life can affect how we see God. We may know what Scripture says about Him, yet deep down expect Him to treat us as someone else did. In other words, we can project onto God what we experienced or came to believe through parents, authority figures and other important relationships. If somebody was distant or harsh, for example, we may begin to expect God to be the same, without even realising it. But God is not a reflection of the people who hurt or disappointed us. Jesus shows us what the Father is truly like.

This is a simple way of bringing those beliefs into the light. We ask God to show us what is there, forgive whoever we need to forgive, renounce the lie and then ask Him for the truth.

> Just remember, this is not a formula. Don't try to make something happen or search for the "right" answer. God is patient. Go at your own pace. And always weigh what you hear against Scripture and the character of Jesus.

A personal example

I asked Father God, "Is there a lie I have come to believe about You?" The words that came were, "I didn't believe You were good." Then, as clear as day, I saw in my imagination a memory of my dad watching football on the television. He was completely absorbed in it and oblivious to me being there.

As I stayed with the memory, I began to understand the connection. As a child, I had felt unnoticed and unimportant. I could see how I had begun to perform or do things to gain attention. Without realising it, I had carried that expectation into my relationship with Father God.

Deep down, I believed He did not really notice me and that I had to work for His attention. This had contributed to the wider lie that God was not good to me. The lie, the memory and the pattern had all come together, so I did not need to ask each question again.

This was not about blaming my dad. He was probably enjoying football on his day off and had no idea how I felt. What mattered was recognising what I had concluded as a child and how that conclusion had affected the way I saw God.

Begin in God's presence

Take a moment to become still. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you and show you what He wants to deal with today.

> *Holy Spirit, lead me into truth. Is there anything false I have believed about the Father, Jesus or You? Help me to hear You without fear or pressure. Amen.*

1. Ask

Start with whichever question you feel drawn to. The steps that follow will help you unpack whatever is revealed. You don't need to ask all three questions today. Take your time. You might begin with one today and return to the others another day.

- Father God, is there a lie I have come to believe about You?
- Jesus, is there a lie I have come to believe about You?
- Holy Spirit, is there a lie I have come to believe about You?

Then wait. Don't try to work it out in your head. The answer may come as a thought, a word, a memory or a picture. You may simply become aware of something. Sometimes the lie and the memory behind it come together. If nothing comes, that is okay. Leave it with God and try again another time.

2. Name the lie

If the lie was already clear when you asked the first question, write it down in the words that came to you. There is no need to ask again. If a memory, picture or feeling came first but the belief is not yet clear, ask, "Lord, what did I come to believe about You because of this?"

It might be, "God is distant," "Jesus will leave me," or something completely different. Don't improve it or make it sound spiritual. Just write what is there. You are not agreeing with the lie by naming it. You are bringing it into the light.

3. Notice where it may have formed

You may already know where the lie came from. Perhaps a memory appeared when you first asked, or a particular person or experience became clear. If so, write down what happened and who was involved. If you know the lie but not where it began, ask, "Lord, is there something that led me to believe this about You?" Don't force a connection or try to make your story fit a pattern. Let the Lord lead you.

4. Choose forgiveness

If somebody hurt you, the next step is forgiveness. Forgiving them does not mean that what they did was acceptable. It does not mean you have to trust them again or remove a necessary boundary. You are handing the person and what happened over to God.

> *Father, I choose to forgive [name] for [say what happened]. You know what this did to me and what I believed because of it. I place them into Your hands now. Please heal the part of me that was hurt.*

You may not feel ready to forgive. Be honest about that. Start with, "Lord, I want to be willing. Please help me." Sometimes we say the words first, and our heart catches up later. That does happen. Remember, forgiveness is a choice, not an emotion.

5. Renounce the lie

Next, renounce the lie. That simply means you are withdrawing your agreement from it. Name the actual lie that came up for you.

> *Example: In the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that [name the lie]. I no longer agree with it. You are not like the person who hurt me, and what happened does not tell me who You are. I choose Your truth instead.*

6. Ask for truth

Go back to the Person of the Trinity you first asked. If you asked the Father, say, “Father, what is the truth?” Do the same with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Then listen. You can also ask, “What do You want me to know?” Write down what comes, but don’t accept something simply because it sounds lovely. Does it agree with Scripture? Does it sound like Jesus?

There is a difference between conviction and condemnation. The Holy Spirit may correct us, but He is gentle and clear. Even when He shows us something that needs to change, His words affirm who we are and lead us back to God. Condemnation accuses and shames us. It can leave us feeling slimy, hopeless and as though there is no way forward. That is not the voice of God. Romans 8:1 tells us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- Does it agree with Scripture?
- Does it reflect the character of Jesus?
- Does it lead towards faith, love, repentance, freedom and peace?
- Still unsure? Talk it through with a mature Christian you trust.

Truth to stand on

- God is compassionate and gracious. Psalm 103:8
- Jesus has made the Father known. John 14:9
- There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1
- The Holy Spirit is our Helper and leads us into truth. John 14:16–17; 16:13
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Romans 8:38–39
- God rejoices over me with gladness and singing. Zephaniah 3:17

7. Keep and practise the truth Write the truth down, along with a Scripture that confirms it. Put it somewhere you will see it again. Read it slowly. Say it aloud. Give it time to sink in.

The old lie may come back. When it does, catch it. “No, that is what I used to believe. This is the truth.” Then go back to what God showed you and to the Scripture He gave you. This is part of renewing the mind. We keep turning away from the old thought and coming back to the truth. Eventually, the truth becomes the place our mind goes to first.

A final invitation

There is one more lovely thing you can do. Ask:

- Father God, what do You want me to know about Your heart towards me?
- Jesus, what do You want me to understand about the way You see me?
- Holy Spirit, what truth do You want to make more real in my life?

Write down the answers, soak them up, and keep them somewhere you'll come back to.