Breaking Agreement With Lies We Believe About Ourselves

A simple listening prayer exercise, grounded in Scripture

> *"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14*

Things people say can stay with us, sometimes for years. The same is true of the way we were treated. Somewhere along the way, "That hurt me" can turn into, "There must be something wrong with me." We may not even realise it has happened. The lie has been there so long that it now feels like the truth and lives in our belief system.

This exercise is simply about asking God if there is a lie sitting beneath the surface. If there is, where did it come from? We can forgive whoever we need to forgive, renounce the lie and ask God what He says about us instead.

> A gentle reminder: you don't need to go digging around for memories, and you don't need to force an answer. Let the Holy Spirit lead you. He knows what you are ready to look at. If something comes up and it feels too much, stop. You can speak to a trusted priest, spiritual director, prayer minister, counsellor or healthcare professional. Especially if there has been trauma or abuse

A personal example

When I did the exercise myself, the lie that came was, "I'm not worthy. I'm less than. I'm inferior." I asked the Lord where it came from, and what came to me was that, growing up, I had not always felt seen, heard or understood.

It wasn't necessarily connected to one big moment. It was more an ongoing sense of feeling overlooked. When a child feels that way, they can begin to think, "What I feel doesn't matter," or, "My voice isn't important." Nobody has to say those exact words. It is simply the conclusion the child may draw from what they have experienced.

Once you believe you are less than other people, it can affect so many areas of your life. You may compare yourself, shrink back or look to others to tell you that you are enough. For me, it was a pattern of people-pleasing, over-explaining and trying to prove my worth.

This wasn't about blaming anybody. It was about recognising what I had come to believe, where that belief had taken me and what God wanted to heal. I know now that my worth does not come from whether other people saw or understood me fully. It comes from God; my value and identity are rooted in Him and what Scripture says about me.

Begin in God's presence

Lord, search my heart. Is there anything false I have believed about myself? Show me what You want me to see today and help me receive the truth. Amen.

1. Ask

Ask God, "Is there a lie I have believed about myself?" Then wait. Something may come straightaway. A word perhaps, a memory, a picture or a feeling. 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. Write down 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 myself because of this?"

Write down the lie that came. Use the words you heard, even if they sound blunt. You might write, "I have believed that I am stupid and I'll never succeed." Notice the wording: I have believed it. It isn't who I am.

3. Ask where it came from

Now ask, "Lord, where did that come from?" You may know immediately. If you don't, wait and see what comes. There is no need to search through your past trying to find something. Just bring God what you honestly remember.

4. Forgive the person who wounded you

Was another person involved? If so, forgive them for the part they played. Say what happened. Forgiveness is not pretending it was all right. It doesn't mean going back into an unsafe relationship either. You are placing the person and the hurt into God's hands.

Father, I forgive Mrs X for telling me I was stupid and humiliating me in front of the class. Her words affected my confidence and some of the choices I made. I place her into Your hands. Please heal the wound those words left in me.

You may not feel ready to forgive. Be honest. "Lord, I want to be willing. Help me." Sometimes we say the words first and our feelings catch up afterwards. That is okay. Remember, forgiveness is a choice, not an emotion.

5. Renounce the lie

Now renounce the lie. What does that mean? You are saying, "I'm not agreeing with this anymore." What happened may have affected you, yes, but it doesn't get to decide who you are.

Example: In the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that I am stupid, incapable or destined to fail. I don't agree with those words anymore. They don't define me. God does. I am made in His image. I can learn and I can grow. What somebody said about me does not have the final word. God's Word does.

6. Receive God's truth

Ask, "Lord, what is the truth about me?" Listen, but don't put pressure on yourself. If something comes, write it down. Then check it. Does it agree with Scripture? Does it sound like Jesus? A thought isn't automatically from God just because it sounds lovely.

- Does it agree with Scripture?
- Does it lead me towards Jesus, faith, love, humility and freedom?
- Does it correct me without condemning or shaming me?
- If you are not sure, speak to a mature Christian you trust.

Truth to stand on

- I am created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27
- I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14
- In Christ, I am a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- I am God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Ephesians 2:10
- I am chosen, holy and beloved. Colossians 3:12
- There is no condemnation for me as I'm in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

7. Write and practise the truth

Write the truth down and add a Scripture. Make it personal. "I am made in the image of God. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I can learn. I can grow. Another person's words do not define me. God does. I am His beloved child and He has a purpose for my life. With Jesus, I can move forward."

Keep the truth somewhere you'll see it. The old lie may pop up again. When it does, catch it: "No, that is the old lie. This is what God says." Go back to your Scripture. Say the truth aloud. You may need to do this again and again. That is part of renewing the mind. Each time, you are deciding which voice you will agree with.

A final invitation

One more lovely thing to do is ask, "God, what do You think about me?" Write down what comes, check it against Scripture and soak it up. Keep it somewhere within easy reach so you can return to it whenever you need to.