

TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

**Practical tools to help you bring your heart to God
and grow in freedom**

‘Guard your heart,
for everything you
do flows from it.’

– Proverbs 4:23

REPLACING LIES WITH TRUTH

LAMENT

FORGIVENESS

HEARING GOD’S VOICE



‘Our prayer is that as you learn to use these tools, they help you know Jesus more, love Him more and become more like Him every day.’



Tools for Transformation

God invites every follower of Jesus to know Him, trust Him and discover the life He created us to live. As we spend time with Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

Following Jesus is a lifelong journey of becoming more like Him.

The Bible says:

'Guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.'

– Proverbs 4:23

Imagine your heart is like a garden. Healthy gardens don't grow by accident; they need to be cared for. Weeds need pulling up and good things need room to grow.

Sometimes seeds are sown into the soil of our hearts that do not belong there and if we leave them to grow, they take over like weeds. These can be lies we believe, unforgiveness we hold onto or disappointment and hurt we have not brought to God. When these things take root, they can stop the good things God wants to grow in us.

The tools in this handbook are simple ways of making space for God to work in your life. They are tools that can help you take care of the garden of your heart. Each one will help you to uproot things that keep you from Him. As you use them you will be making room for His truth, peace, joy, hope, freedom and love to take root and to flourish and grow within you.

These tools aren't about trying harder or earning God's love. They are ways of staying close to Jesus so He can shape you into the person He created you to be. As we faithfully use them, we open ourselves to the work God wants to do in us: pulling up weeds, strengthening our roots and growing His character and fruit in our lives.

Just as a garden needs sunlight, water and good soil to flourish, our hearts grow best when we spend time with God, learn from His Word, listen to the Holy Spirit and obey what He says – all done in community together with other followers of Jesus.

Our prayer is that as you learn to use these tools, they help you know Jesus more, love Him more and become more like Him every day.

REPLACING LIES WITH TRUTH

IF YOU HOLD TO MY TEACHING,
YOU ARE REALLY MY DISCIPLES.
THEN YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH,
AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE.'
— JOHN 8:31-32



Why truth matters

What we believe shapes the way we see God and the way we see ourselves.

Like weeds in a garden, lies can grow, stealing our confidence, peace, hope and joy. But they don't just take from us: when lies take root, they can prevent other good things from growing in our lives.

The more we agree with lies, the more they shape the way we think, the way we feel and the way we act. That is why we need to uproot lies and replace them with God's truth. God's Word is powerful and His truth sets us free. When we listen to what He says and choose to believe His Word instead of something that is not true, He gives us the power to walk in freedom and live as the person He created us to be.

So how do we learn to recognise where we are believing a lie and learn to uproot it and replace it with the truth?

How to replace lies with God's truth

ASK → BREAK → REPENT → RECEIVE → REMEMBER

ASK

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any lies you are believing so that they can be uprooted and replaced with His truth.



PRAY *'Holy Spirit, is there a lie I am believing?'*

On the next page, you'll find a list of lies that many of us believe at different times. You may find it helpful to read through each one slowly and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight any that resonate with you or reveal something you have been believing about yourself or God. You may also sense God show you something that is not on this list.

Once you have identified a lie, you need to begin the steps below to reject the lie and replace it with God's truth.



BREAK

Before you can receive God's truth, you need to choose to break agreement with the lie. When you do this, you stop allowing it to shape how you see yourself and God.



PRAY 'I choose to break agreement with the lie that _____.
(say the lie here). This is not true and I reject it now.'

REPENT

Repentance means turning away from the lie and turning back towards God's truth.

Ask God to forgive you for believing a lie and allowing it to influence the way you have seen yourself or Him.



PRAY 'Father, forgive me for believing the lie that _____.
I choose to turn away from this. I want to agree with Your truth
and receive what You say is true. Amen.'

RECEIVE

Ask God what truth He wants to show you. God may want to reveal truth about who He is, who you are, His promises or how He sees your situation.

God's truth will bring freedom because His voice is greater and more powerful than any lies we have believed.



PRAY 'Father, what do You want me to know is true?'

You may find it helpful to look at the *Lies & Truth* table on pages 6–7 or to ask a trusted friend or youth leader, 'What does God's Word say about this?'



REMEMBER

To receive His truth, we first listen to Him and then we respond by agreeing with what He says. It helps to speak His truth out loud for ourselves. The more we remember and declare God's truth, the more our minds are renewed, and our identity becomes rooted in Him.

Write down the truth God shows you. Put it somewhere you will see it daily – your phone screen, mirror, journal or bedroom wall.

Turn these truths into something you say out loud on a regular basis.

Start by declaring who God is, then remind yourself who you are because of Him:

'I thank You, God, that You are _____.'

'I am _____ because You say _____.'

Here are some declarations of truth you can make:

'I thank You, God, that You are my Creator and that You know me completely.'

'I am valuable and chosen because You say I am wonderfully made and loved by You.' (Psalm 139:14)

'I thank You, God, that You are faithful and that You strengthen me.'

'I can face what is ahead because God says He is with me and will never leave me.' (Isaiah 41:10, Hebrews 13:5)

ASK → BREAK → REPENT → RECEIVE → REMEMBER

Lies & Truth - Whose voice are you listening to?

Every day we hear hundreds of messages from social media, friends, family, our own thoughts and feelings. Some of those messages are true, but many are lies that leave us feeling afraid, insecure or feeling like we are not enough.

God's voice is different: He always speaks truth because He is truth.

As you read through the statements on the next pages, ask yourself:

'What have I been believing?'

'Where do I need to reject the lie and come into agreement with God's truth?'

THE LIE I AM BELIEVING	WHAT GOD SAYS	I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE...
I've been rejected, so I'm not worth loving.	'I have loved you with an everlasting love.' (Jeremiah 31:3) 'See what great love the Father has lavished on us...' (1 John 3:1)	God's love for me never changes. He knows everything about me and still loves me completely.
I don't fit in, which means I don't belong.	'To all who received Him...He gave the right to become children of God.' (John 1:12)	I belong in God's family as His child and that's where my identity is found.
I am alone, nobody cares about me.	'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' (Hebrews 13:5)	God is always with me. I am never alone because He never leaves me.
My value depends on what people think of me.	'You are precious and honoured in my sight.' (Isaiah 43:4)	I am valued by God
I'll never change – this is just who I am.	'He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...' (Philippians 1:6)	God is changing me day by day. He isn't finished with me yet.
I'm too ordinary. God could never use someone like me.	'The LORD will fulfil his purpose for me...' (Psalm 138:8)	God created me for a purpose, and He can use me.

THE LIE I AM BELIEVING	WHAT GOD SAYS	I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE...
I'm not good enough for God to love me.	'While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' (Romans 5:8) 'There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:1)	God's love is a gift. I don't have to earn it. He loves me because of His grace.
I've messed up too much, God can't use me.	'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us.' (1 John 1:9) 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.' (2 Corinthians 5:17)	Jesus has forgiven me. My past doesn't define me. He gives me a new beginning.
If I looked different, I'd finally be confident and people would like me.	'You are fearfully and wonderfully made.' (Psalm 139:14)	God made me wonderfully. My worth isn't based on how I look.
Being a woman/man is second best.	'So God created mankind in His own image... male and female He created them.' (Genesis 1:27)	God created me intentionally. Men and women are equally valuable, loved, and made in God's image. My identity and worth come from Him.



LAMENT

‘TRUST IN HIM AT ALL TIMES, YOU PEOPLE;
POUR OUT YOUR HEARTS TO HIM,
FOR GOD IS OUR REFUGE.’

— *Psalm 62:8*

‘COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND BURDENED,
AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST... I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART,
AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.’

— *Matthew 11:28-29*



Why do we need to lament?

When life hurts it's possible that we can keep our pain and disappointment locked up inside. To lament is to choose the opposite. It is bringing our sadness and hurt to the One who loves us and welcomes us exactly as we are.

God is not distant, irritated or disappointed by our emotions. He is a safe place where we can pour out our hearts and be completely honest. He invites us to bring our pain to Him and He meets us with love, grace and compassion.

To lament is to say, 'God, this hurts. Instead of carrying it on my own, I'm turning to You and bringing it to You.'

Lamenting helps us stay connected to our Father, even when we don't have answers or life doesn't make sense. We don't have to face our pain alone. We can bring it to God with raw honesty and invite Him to meet us where we are. As we do this, He wants us to experience His love, know His peace and receive His comfort.

How to lament

TURN → TELL → TRUST → REQUEST

TURN – Bring your pain to God

Don't wait until you've sorted your feelings out. Come just as you are.

Ask the Holy Spirit to gently reveal what you are feeling and what is beneath those feelings. Invite Him to help you bring it honestly before God.

Sometimes we begin by noticing an emotion:

'I feel upset.'

As we bring that feeling honestly to God, He may show us where it is coming from:

**'I feel let down. I was really believing that this time when I prayed,
You would heal me. But You haven't.'**

Beneath that, He may uncover something even deeper:

'I don't know why You aren't answering me, and don't know if You ever will.'



Lament gives us a place to bring our emotions, fears and deeper struggles to God. We don't have to hide the emotion or have everything figured out before we come to Him.



PRAY *'Father God, what am I carrying today? Am I feeling disappointment, grief, sadness, fear, confusion, anxiety, anger, loneliness or hurt? Please show me what You are inviting me to bring to You today.'*

It may help to imagine holding whatever comes to mind in your hands and turning towards God, bringing your hurt, questions and emotions to Him.



PRAY *'Father God, I bring You what I am carrying.'*

TELL – Truthfully tell Him how you feel

The Psalms show us that we can tell God how we honestly feel. He draws near in our tears, disappointment and grief. He meets us in our pain. We don't have to hide our emotions or find the right words.

You might say:

- 'God, this really hurts, and I don't understand why it happened.'
- 'I'm disappointed, and I'm struggling to trust You right now.'
- 'God, I'm angry about what happened, and I don't know what to do with these feelings.'
- 'I feel let down, lonely and overwhelmed. I'm tired of carrying this.'
- 'This isn't how I thought things would turn out, and I'm finding it hard to make sense of it.'



Reading a Psalm that puts into words what you feel can also be helpful.

As you do this, remember – *'The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.'* (Psalm 34:18)

God listens. He stays. You are not alone. He is with you and hears your cries.



TRUST – Remember who God is

Trust does not mean pretending it doesn't hurt.

It means choosing to believe that **even in your pain, God still sees you, God still loves you, God is still with you.**

He is faithful, unchanging and good. He is compassionate, patient and full of mercy. He is sovereign over every circumstance, yet close to the broken-hearted. Nothing surprises Him, nothing is beyond His power and nothing can separate you from His love. He is faithful to His promises and your story is not finished.

When trust feels difficult, remind yourself of what is true. Read God's Word. Listen to worship that reminds you of His character. Remember times He has been faithful before. Talk to trusted people who can remind you of God's goodness when you struggle to see it for yourself.



PRAY *'Father God, I don't understand everything, but I know You are good, You are faithful and You have not left me. Help me to trust You with what I cannot understand.'*

REQUEST – Ask for God's help

God invites us to ask for His help.

The writers of the Psalms asked God to come close:



'Bend down to listen, and answer me quickly when I call to you.'
– Psalm 102:2

'Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love.'
– Psalm 6:4

Ask God to comfort you, strengthen you, give you peace or show you what your next step is.



PRAY *'I know You hear me in my sadness. Meet me in my pain, give me Your peace, remind me that You are near and help me to keep walking with You.'*

A simple prayer of lament

You can use this prayer as a guide to help you start an honest conversation with God:

PRAY

'God, I bring You...

It hurts and I feel...

I don't understand why this has happened, but I'm choosing to bring it to You instead of carrying it on my own.

Please meet me in my pain. Help me remember that You are with me, You are good and You have not left me.

I don't understand everything, but I choose to trust You with what I cannot understand.'



FORGIVENESS

‘FORGIVE US OUR SINS,
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE
WHO SIN AGAINST US.’

– *Matthew 6:12*

‘BE KIND AND COMPASSIONATE
TO ONE ANOTHER, FORGIVING EACH OTHER,
JUST AS IN CHRIST GOD FORGAVE YOU.’

– *Ephesians 4:32*



Understanding forgiveness

At the cross Jesus paid the debt we owed to God for our sin. His death makes it possible for us to receive forgiveness. We are forgiven, not because we have earned it, but because forgiveness is a gift of God's grace.

Since we have first been loved and forgiven by Him, we can also forgive others. Forgiveness reflects God's heart and is part of learning to live the way Jesus teaches us.

Forgiveness can be one of the hardest things Jesus tells us to do. You might think, 'But what they did was wrong', or 'Why should I forgive them?' or 'Does forgiveness mean I have to trust them again?' These are important questions and God cares about the hurt we have experienced.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending something didn't happen, excusing someone's actions or saying what they did was okay. It does not always mean rebuilding trust or returning to the same relationship.

Sometimes we need to forgive not only the things people have done to us intentionally, but also the things that have hurt us even when they didn't mean to cause harm.

Forgiveness is choosing to release the person who hurt you into God's hands and trusting Him with justice and healing.

Why is forgiveness important?

Forgiveness brings us freedom. When we hold onto hurt and unforgiveness, we stay tied to the pain. It can grow into anger, resentment and bitterness. It can feel like carrying a heavy weight that keeps pulling us back to what happened.

Unforgiveness → keeps us carrying the weight of the hurt

Forgiveness → releases the person into God's hands

Jesus → carries what we were never meant to carry

Forgiveness is choosing to hand that weight over to Jesus. It is saying, 'God, I trust You with what happened. I give this person to You and trust You to bring justice. I choose not to carry this burden anymore. I am looking to You for healing and restoration.'



Forgiveness is a decision, but it is not necessarily a one-time decision. It's a choice we may need to make repeatedly as God gently transforms our hearts. Each time we place our hurt in His hands, we open ourselves to more of His healing, peace and freedom.

How do we forgive?

ASK → IDENTIFY → FORGIVE → BLESS → RESTORE → RETURN

ASK



PRAY *'Holy Spirit, as I walk through this process, help me bring my pain to You, to forgive where I need to forgive and show me what healing looks like.'*

Sometimes we are already aware of a hurt or offence we are carrying. Other times, there may be things we have buried, minimised or not recognised as needing forgiveness.

Invite the Holy Spirit to gently reveal anyone you need to forgive and any hurt you need to bring to Him. Someone may have said or done things that hurt you, or they may have failed to love, care for or treat you as they should have.

The wound may feel deep and life-changing or it may seem more like a scratch that is still troubling you. Whatever caused the pain, and however significant it feels, your hurt matters to God. He invites you to forgive because He wants to bring healing and freedom to your heart.



PRAY *'Holy Spirit, is there anyone I need to forgive? Is there any hurt I need to bring to You?'*

Take time to listen and allow God to gently reveal what He wants to heal.



IDENTIFY

Bring your emotions honestly before God. Express any hurt, disappointment or pain you've felt whether it was caused intentionally or without someone realising.

Even loving and kind people will say or do things that hurt us and it is ok to bring these feelings to God.

It may be that you are carrying pain that you feel has been caused by God or by yourself. All this can be brought to Him.

Emotions are God-given and expressing them openly, as Jesus and the writers of Psalms modelled, is part of healing and freedom.

As you do this, it is helpful to:

Name what happened without minimising it

'God, I want to be honest about something that hurt me.

When _____ happened, I felt _____.

I was hurt when they said/did _____.'

Name the emotion underneath

Sometimes the first emotion isn't the deepest one. For example:

'I felt angry, but underneath that I felt rejected.'

'I felt frustrated, but underneath that I felt unseen.'

Speak honestly about the impact

'Because of this, I started to believe that _____.'

It made me feel _____.

I wish they had understood _____.'

If someone has hurt you, it can be really helpful to imagine them in front of you as you speak out why you feel hurt and get out what you've been holding inside.



FORGIVE

It can be helpful in this step to picture a boat floating on water.

This is not an image of forgiveness that is in the Bible, but it can be a helpful as a visual representation of what happens emotionally and spiritually when you let go of the pain you are carrying.

Put the person/people you are choosing to forgive into the boat and then imagine yourself cutting a rope that is attaching you to the boat and to the pain caused by that person/people.



PRAY '____ (person's name), I forgive you for ____ (what they did to you) and I release you into the sea of God's mercy and grace.'

If you find yourself wishing the boat will sink or get hit by a storm, you need to work through Step 2 (Identify) a bit more until you've said all you want to say to them.

BLESS

As you forgive the person and picture them sailing away in the boat, you can now pray for God's goodness and blessing over their life.



PRAY 'God, I pray for ____ and ask You to bless them with ____ (name some blessings).'

RESTORE

When we forgive, we release into God's hands the people who have wounded us and the hurt we have been holding.

Letting go of these things enables us to receive from our Father God.

As we surrender what we have been carrying, He meets us with His healing, reminds us what is true, assures us of His love and offers us fresh hope.



God wants to restore

God wants to bring healing to the places that still hurt, replace any lies with truth and fill your heart with hope.

HEALING

Forgiveness does not mean the hurt of what we have experienced disappears instantly. But as we open our heart to God, we can invite Him to bring healing to our pain.

He redeems our stories, gives us peace and comforts us. We can trust Him for this.

TRUTH

As God heals our hearts, He also wants to restore the way we see ourselves, others and Him.

Hurt can leave us believing things that are not true about ourselves (our worth and our identity) or God's character. These lies can shape how we see ourselves and affect the way we live.

Ask God to reveal any lies you have believed because of the hurt and invite Him to replace them with His truth.

Allow God to bring freedom by reminding you of who He is, how He sees you and what He says over you.

HOPE

Hurt can make us feel as though nothing will ever change. We may expect more disappointment, struggle to trust people again or believe our story will always be defined by what happened.

Ask God: *'Where have I lost hope because of this hurt?'*

God is a God of hope. He is able to bring new life out of painful places and write a future that is not controlled by our past.

As you open your hands to Him, ask God to fill your heart with fresh hope. Invite Him to remind you of His promises, reassure you of His presence and give you peace about the future.



AS YOU PRAY it is helpful to picture placing the things you have been carrying and the people you have chosen to forgive into God's hands. And then picture holding your hands open before Him, ready to receive what your good Father wants to give you.



'Father, thank You that You are a good Father and that You help us forgive.

As I forgive _____ (person's name), I open my heart to You, God. Is there anything you would like to show me or tell me in this moment? Show me what You want me to receive from You. Amen.'

RETURN

Forgiveness is not something we do once. As we walk with God and journey through life alongside other people, it's inevitable that we will continue to experience hurt and disappointment. So forgiveness is a choice we need to return to again and again.



Jesus taught us to pray each day:

'... forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.'

– Matthew 6:12

Receiving His forgiveness and forgiving others is part of our daily walk with God. We remember that we are forgiven and loved by Him, bring our hurts to Him and extend forgiveness to others.

Return to these steps regularly to cultivate a habit of forgiveness in your life.



HEARING GOD'S VOICE

'MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM,
AND THEY FOLLOW ME.'

– *John 10:27*

'FOLLOW THE WAY OF LOVE AND EAGERLY
DESIRE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT, ESPECIALLY PROPHECY...
THE ONE WHO PROPHESES SPEAKS TO PEOPLE FOR THEIR
STRENGTHENING, ENCOURAGING AND COMFORT.'

– *1 Corinthians 14:1,3*



‘My sheep hear My voice...’

We are made to be in relationship with God and He is not distant or indifferent. He knows us, loves us and wants us to know Him.

God delights to speak to us, and we listen for His voice so we can know Him more, understand His heart, receive His guidance and walk in the way He has created us to live.

Hearing God's voice is not just for a few special people; it is for everyone who follows Jesus. All those who belong to Him can learn to recognise the sound of His voice. And this means you too!

Hearing God flows best out of a close and personal relationship with God. As you spend time with God and learn His ways, you become more familiar with His voice and more aware of how He is speaking.

As you learn to hear God for yourself, God also invites you to eagerly desire hearing His voice for the encouragement, strengthening and comfort of others.

How is God drawing your attention?

God often draws our attention in gentle, personal ways. Hearing God's voice is sometimes like a quiet inner nudge – a whisper, a thought or impression – that draws you closer to Him. His voice is usually not loud or forceful, so it can be easy to miss if you are distracted.

So, how does God get your attention? Perhaps in some of these ways:

Through Scripture

- A Bible verse suddenly stands out to you
- A story or Bible character comes to mind

Through creation

- Something in nature catches your attention



Through everyday life

Where your attention is drawn to:

- Words from a song
- A colour or object
- Something someone is wearing
- A particular person or group of people

Through your thoughts

- Someone unexpectedly comes to mind
- While praying, you get a thought, word, phrase or image in your mind

Through pictures

- A mental picture or scene
- A visual impression that seems to carry God's encouragement

Through your emotions

- A deep sense of peace
- A loving urgency to pray for or encourage someone



HEARING GOD'S VOICE

These simple steps can help you notice when God is speaking, listen to what He is saying and respond to Him.

NOTICE → PAUSE → ASK → CONSIDER → ACT

NOTICE

Make space to quieten distractions.

Where is God getting your attention? What do you see, hear, or sense?

PAUSE

Don't rush past what God may be showing you.

Be still and create space to listen. Slow down and tune in.

ASK

Invite God to speak:

'Lord, what are You saying or showing me through this?'

CONSIDER

Take time to test what you sense.

Does it agree with the Bible? Does it reflect God's character? Does it produce love, hope, peace, encouragement?

ACT

Ask God:

'How are You inviting me to respond? What do You want me to do with this?'

This could look like talking to God about what He has shown you and asking Him to keep speaking to you. It could be that you need to let go of something you're holding onto, take a brave step of faith or make a change about something in your life. If you're unsure, talk to a trusted Christian leader or mentor.



HEARING GOD'S VOICE FOR OTHERS

God speaks to draw us closer to Him and reveal His heart. Sometimes He speaks to us for ourselves, and sometimes He speaks to us for other people. He loves to speak to us and *through* us.

Prophecy is the gift of hearing God's voice for others and sharing His encouragement, comfort and strength with them. The Bible encourages us to eagerly desire the gift of prophecy.

God may highlight a person or group of people to you and give you a thought, a picture, a Bible verse or a feeling that you sense is from Him.

If you feel God is speaking to you for someone else, take the same steps:

NOTICE

Make space to quieten distractions.

Where is God getting your attention? What do you see, hear, or sense?

PAUSE

Don't rush past what God may be showing you.

Be still and create space to listen. Slow down and tune in.

ASK

Invite God to speak:

'Lord, what are You saying or showing me through this?'

CONSIDER

Take time to test what you sense.

Does it agree with the Bible? Does it reflect God's character? Does it produce love, hope, peace, encouragement?

ACT

Ask God:

'How are You inviting me to respond? What do You want me to do with this?'



If you sense this is something to share:

THINK – but don't overthink

- Sometimes we can think ourselves out of doing what God is asking us to do.
- What feels small or ordinary to you may be exactly what someone else needs.
- God can use simple words of encouragement to touch someone's heart and meet their deepest need.
- You will never know if you don't share!

STEP OUT

- If you sense God is inviting you to encourage someone else, take a step of faith.
- Trust the nudge of the Spirit, be brave and share it with kindness and humility.

SHARE

- Bring what you have and begin with encouraging words: 'I feel like God might be saying...' or 'I have the impression that...'

PRAY

- Ask if you can pray for them.
- You can pray what you have sensed God is showing you.
- It's good to pray with your eyes open, paying attention to what God may be doing.
- Listen as you pray, and if something seems to connect with the person, don't rush past it – stay with it and ask God how He wants to continue encouraging them.

REMEMBER

- This isn't about having the perfect words; it's about loving people, stepping out in faith and trusting God to work.
- When it's a good moment, you could ask for feedback on what you have shared and ask what it means to them.
- Feedback helps you grow in the gift and increases your faith as you hear how God has worked through your obedience in sharing what He showed you.



