



UNBOUND

A Practical Guide to Deliverance

NEAL LOZANO

FOREWORD BY JOHN LOREN SANDFORD

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Acknowledgments

For several years I struggled with the thought of writing a book on freedom from the influence of evil spirits. Having written before, I knew the kind of commitment and sacrifice it would take. I needed to know it was God's plan and not simply mine. Upon returning from a powerful mission trip, my wife, Janet, and I gathered in thanksgiving with our brothers and sisters in the House of God's Light Community, a Christian community located in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. As we finished prayer Ann Stevens, a longtime friend and member of the community, looked at me and said, "When are you going to write your book? I will help you!" It was one of those moments that stood still. As the minutes passed the words lingered. I knew God had spoken. It was His word to me, and I could rely on His help. I want to thank Ann for her help but most of all for speaking the words that released faith.

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Foreword

Neal Lozano is careful to lay a foundation of love for and life in Jesus Christ as the requisite basis for all deliverances. His book *Unbound* sings of love in our Lord as the foundation of all ministry. We have seen many practitioners of deliverance who have not ministered out of the Lord's love and have unnecessarily frightened and wounded those they deliver. Lozano teaches that sensitivity and courtesy throughout deliverance sessions need to be written on the hearts of every deliverance minister.

Neal has the ability to write of high spiritual matters, which are sometimes complex, with engaging simplicity. This can move the field of deliverance out of exclusivity in ministry by a few "gifted" ones into the province of normal, everyday lay Christians. Our loving Lord has long wanted this. He wants Christians of all walks and levels of maturity to be able to deliver one another. Neal's book has already helped move us in that direction.

Tough cases will always remain, requiring expert ministry. For these, I hope lay Christians have the wisdom and common sense to refer to others what lies beyond their own calling and expertise.

The psalmist testifies, “My heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me” (Psalm 131:1, NASB). It is almost guaranteed that anyone who enters deliverance ministry will come up against cases, sooner or later, beyond his or her expertise. Pride and presumption can occur and cause the ministry to fail or the ministering one to get into trouble. There is always that risk when God’s people are called into deliverance or other kinds of spiritual warfare.

But Jesus is Lord and able to rescue—and teach some hard lessons of wisdom in the process. I hope Neal’s book can so call the Body of Christ into the work of deliverance that wisdom will guide with requisite restraint and caution, coupled with holy boldness.

Deliverance ministry calls for humility, and Neal Lozano’s book is so replete with that welcome attitude that I, for one, believe it can call into deliverance ministry with minimum risk.

For that posture of humility, coupled with holy boldness, I heartily recommend that readers not only study this book but keep it handy as a reference for daily use, and spread its message to others, helping many needy people find Christians able to help.

To date, the fields are ripe to harvest—so many need deliverance—and there are too few laborers. May this book enlist an army.

John Loren Sandford
Co-founder, Elijah House Ministries, Inc.
Co-author, *Deliverance and Inner Healing*

Introduction

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13–14, RSV

In January 1970, my life was changed forever when God revealed His love to me.¹ Shortly after, however, I began to notice that the devil brought opposition to me when I was seeking to serve the Lord. Whether it was an ill-timed sickness before a retreat, or my back going out before I was scheduled to speak, I became aware of how Satan used my fear to cause physical symptoms in order to deter me. I began to understand that temptation was not just a struggle against personal weaknesses but was in fact a strategic, demonic campaign to derail me and to destroy my faith.

As I read the Scriptures, I noticed the many references to the work of demons and to the freedom that Jesus brings from evil spirits. I read whatever I could find on deliverance. I listened intently to people's stories about being freed from spiritual bondage in the name of Jesus. I became increasingly aware of a need for greater freedom in my life and the

lives of those around me. The only help I knew of, the only help I could offer other struggling Christians, were familiar Scripture verses I thought I understood: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7, RSV); “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Yet something was still missing. I did not yet know how to practically live the truth of those verses.

About fifteen years later, the Lord taught me how to resist the devil and the ways the truth sets us free when a godly man, through the power of the Holy Spirit, delivered me from the influence of an evil spirit, a spirit that had kept me in real spiritual bondage rooted in a deep wound from my past. That event was hugely significant. I was able to take hold of the freedom Christ won for me in a new way. Over the years, I have been able to assist hundreds of others to do the same as my wife, Janet, and I have traveled the country and the world teaching at UNBOUND: Freedom in Christ conferences.

I believe in deliverance. Yet I also believe that most of our spiritual freedom comes when we learn the truth of who God is and we actually believe what He has said about Himself, about us, and about His workings in our lives. Trusting God, along with resisting temptation, repenting of sin, renouncing the works of the devil and forgiving those who have harmed us, accounts for ninety-eight per cent of our deliverance. Many of us, though, do not find complete freedom until we have gained that last two per cent: when we command the enemy to leave.

I teach this understanding of deliverance as the “Five Keys.” These five prayer principles—repent, forgive, renounce in the name of Jesus, take authority in the name of Jesus, and receive the Father’s blessing—are carefully explained and modeled in the chapters that follow. Each key addresses issues at the heart of our inability to take hold of the redemption that we have been given in Christ. Once deep heart issues are dealt with in this non-confrontational style of deliverance, freedom

comes. It usually comes quietly. At one of our conferences in Kenya, the leaders expressed great relief at this. “You mean we do not have to shout and scream to help those in bondage?” We have heard similar comments in many other places, as Christian leaders have adopted the *Unbound* model.

The *Unbound* model of deliverance has been introduced and used around the world, in countries as far away as Ghana, Rwanda, and Papua New Guinea. To date, *Unbound* has been translated into Spanish, Ukrainian, Polish, Slovakian, and Slovenian. A Russian translation is in process.

A Christian friend of mine, a psychologist who does not believe in the devil, sent me the following anecdote after she read the first draft of this book.²

Two boys were walking home from Sunday School after hearing a strong sermon on the devil.

One asked, “What do you think about all that Satan stuff?”

“You know how Santa Claus turned out,” the friend replied. “It’s probably just your dad.”

I can understand her skepticism. I also appreciate the truth in the anecdote. The level of influence of evil spirits in one’s life is often rooted in one’s early experience or lack of experience with dad, mom, and the traumas of life. The Scriptures tell us, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). What better prey for the lion than one who has been wounded? As you will read, this book is not so much about evil spirits as it is about acknowledging the doors we have opened to their influence and learning how to close them. Deliverance is no more about the devil than the Exodus was about Pharaoh. Rather, deliverance from evil spirits removes obstacles so we may receive, in Christ, the Father’s blessing.

In this book, I focus on spiritual freedom in the context of the normal Christian life. Many people have gone to coun-

seling, confessed their sins, pursued a God-centered life and done all they know to be free from spiritual bondage in specific areas of their lives. No matter what they do, they find no relief. Many faithful, committed believers have lived with hidden sin, compulsion, and fear due to spiritual deception. It may never have occurred to them that they might need deliverance from evil spirits.

Before my wife delivered our first son, we went to a birthing class so we would understand the process and not be frightened by the unknown. Education taught us how to deal with our fears. I have written this book for the same reason: so that you will know how to cooperate with the Lord as He sets you free. It is written from the heart with a desire to speak to your heart and help you along the way. Yes, I hope this book will contribute something to the search for a balanced, safe, and faithful approach to the ministry of deliverance. But my primary interest is speaking to the hearts of those who seek deeper conversion to our Lord Jesus. Jesus is our liberator. He is the truth, and He has told us that the truth sets us free.

How to Read This Book

You are invited to take a personal journey through the first part of the book (chapters 1–9). Each chapter ends with a prayer and reflection designed to help you start a dialogue with the Lord. You may take this journey alone, or with a friend you trust, or in a small group with a trusted leader. My prayer is that you will encounter the Holy Spirit working in you to bring you to greater liberty.

Part 1 is a step-by-step reflection on the various principles that form the basis for prayer that leads to freedom and blessing. They are intended to help you make a faith response. You might read these chapters before and/or after someone prayed with you. The more you understand, the less control

the enemy has. Your understanding will help expel fear and reduce the likelihood of disruptive manifestations of evil spirits.

Chapters 1 through 9 cover these points:

- Because of Jesus, we have hope and can ask for the blessing we need.
- Jesus is our hope; He is our Savior.
- Jesus saves us from sin and from Satan's plan for our lives.
- Jesus reveals to us our hearts so that we can repent.
- Jesus gives us the power to forgive others and to renounce the enemy in our lives.
- We have authority over the devil's influence in our lives in the name of Jesus.
- God wants to bless us by revealing who we are, so we might fulfill our destiny.

I suggest that you journal, as you progress through the principles in this book. Keep a private record of the Lord's message to you and of your response, whether it is dramatic or a more gradual awareness of God's conviction, presence and power to transform and bless you.

The second part of the book focuses on how to assist others in the prayer for deliverance³ and how to apply the principles in the first section. Part 2 will be helpful even for readers who rarely have the opportunity to pray for others.

Many people with pastoral responsibility use this book as a tool to prepare people to receive personal ministry. Asking people to prepare for ministry by reading the first half of the book provides an opportunity for deeper insight into issues that need to be addressed and a better understanding of how to cooperate with the process of liberation.

It is my deepest desire that those of you who have not received transformative help in the past or have not been understood by those trying to help you would receive hope through this book. As you look to the Lord to help you, continue in the basics: worship, prayer, repentance, fasting, discipline and spiritual counseling, and encountering the power of the Gospel, which sets the captive free. Deliverance is not a magic pill; it is part of the glorious ongoing work of the Holy Spirit transforming the lives of those who are being conformed into the likeness of the Son (Romans 8:29).

This book is about the hope and freedom that is ours through Jesus Christ. This freedom is released as we learn to cooperate with God's grace and gain the victory He has already given us.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night . . .
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

—Charles Wesley

When I first wrote *Unbound*, George Gallup called it a breakthrough book. Since then many others have said the same. It has been a vehicle for transformation in thousands of lives throughout the world. We regularly hear from people who have opened doors to freedom as they have read the chapters, personalized the message, and prayed the suggested prayers. The book has prepared others for an initial encounter with their Redeemer. Deliverance is the great theme of Scripture and the eternal purpose of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God destroying the works of the devil in our lives so we may receive the inheritance we have in Christ: the kingdom of God (see Colossians 1:13; 1 John 3:8).

PART 1
FREEDOM

1

Freedom to Hope

Jesus was savior. He rescued men from the evil and hopeless situation in which they found themselves; he broke the chains that bound them to the past and gave them a power which enabled them to meet the future.

William Barclay

“Good-bye. Thank you. Now I have hope!” Anna¹ had seen a lot by the age of nineteen. Her father traveled extensively, but even when he was home he was emotionally absent. Anna experienced torment and confusion growing up with her alcoholic mom and older brother. When she came to my wife, Janet, and me, sadness covered her. Evasive in her speech, she was unable to lift her head to look at us as she spoke. She had recently come to the Lighthouse Fellowship in Poland and had begun to pursue the Lord.

“Is there anyone you need to forgive?” we asked.

“Yes, but I’m afraid I will hurt the person if I tell you.” A moment later she did name someone: “My mother drinks.”

“Anna, if you want to be free, you need to let Jesus help you forgive,” I told her. “Make the decision and say the words, and Jesus will do the rest. Do you want to?”

“Yes,” she confessed.

Yet she could not repeat a short prayer after me. She couldn’t speak. As I prayed for her and listened with my spirit, the Lord opened her heart to me, and I experienced the agony of her loneliness and desperation. “Lord,” I prayed aloud, “Anna has lived in chaos and has never known what to expect. She wanted to fix things but couldn’t.” She began to sob. “But the thing she doesn’t understand is why You didn’t do anything. She knows You are God and can do anything. She has cried out to You; she has begged You; she has cried herself to sleep night after night, and You did not answer.”

Now Anna was sobbing uncontrollably, wrenched with the pain of years of agony. Janet and the interpreter wept with her as God allowed them also to experience the depth of her pain. Then I prayed, “Lord, I don’t understand. I don’t understand why You didn’t do something.” We all wept together before the Lord.

“Now, Anna, would you renounce a spirit of unforgiveness, hurt and torment?” I asked her. “Will you say, ‘I forgive you, Mom?’” She was ready, for she knew that others felt her pain. Most of all she knew her pain in a new way, as she allowed it to be brought to light.

“I forgive you, Mom, for your drinking and for rejecting me and for all the confusion and hurt. I forgive you for not loving me the way I needed to be loved.” Then she renounced sadness, self-rejection, condemnation and self-accusation. She was being set free. We knew Anna had a long journey ahead, but we were grateful she was in a fellowship of believers who could help her as she continued to seek God’s good plan and deny the devil access to her life.

The next day, her face was bright and her personality was joyful, not sad. We discovered her wonderful sense of humor. She brought her family to meet us. Before we left town she

waited by herself for more than an hour so she could get a picture of herself with us and say the words that still stir our hearts, “Thank you, now I have hope.”

Desperate for Hope

Anna was an ordinary person in a very difficult and painful situation. Hopelessness and despair were slowly destroying her. While your situation may be very different from Anna’s, is there an area of your life marked by hopelessness? Have you, like Anna, cried out to God day after day without a change? Has an attitude of resentment toward God crept into your heart and created a sense of distance when you try to approach Him? Is there something you have confessed over and over, but it has never changed?

For some people the need for hope is much more subtle, hidden. A longtime friend came to me for counsel because he struggled in several areas of his life. I asked Dave if he would like to renounce some of the areas he mentioned. He agreed. Here he tells his story:

“I prayed earnestly with Neal but sensed nothing out of the ordinary. Then Neal mentioned renouncing ‘despair’ and ‘hopelessness.’ Something happened. I found myself struggling to reject these spirits. As I tried, a well of emotions seemed to be attached to each, and I struggled to say them verbally without difficulty. As I did, anguish and pain rose up, and these emotions went with the rejection of the spirits. It was short, acute and real. A calming effect and a sense of relief followed this.

“A week or so after the prayer, I experienced a situation that in the past would have caused me great anguish and, yes, fleeting despair (although I would not have recognized it as despair or hopelessness). Although I reacted with concern, my emotions and thought patterns did not stoop to a lower, darker level. I believe that a door in my thought patterns

and emotions that would have taken me down into a darker place has been shut. It isn't there now. It's up to me to keep that door shut."

It took me by surprise as well. I knew Dave as an enthusiastic Christian, always ready to serve and encourage others. Someone he greatly respected had betrayed him more than fifteen years earlier. He thought it had been resolved, yet in that situation a spirit of hopelessness, unidentified and hidden to Dave and to those around him, gained access and lingered in his life.

In some way Dave had grown resigned to his lack of hope. Maybe you feel hopeless in some area of your life, and you search for ways to numb the hopelessness. Some of us adjust our thinking to "It's just me; that's the way I am"; "It's something I will have to live with"; "It's not really that bad; I will get through."

Too Discouraged to Hope?

Prior to being set free a friend of mine struggled with overeating. She wrote: "I lately found myself sliding back down the slippery slope of eating when I wasn't hungry, which turned into being whenever I was angry, frustrated and/or alone. Yuck! Back came the few pounds I'd lost along with plenty of hopelessness, guilt, anger, depression. I was so frustrated, because I knew better, but was still being disobedient and feeling cut off from God; it was like I couldn't hear Him or approach Him until I got this food-obedience thing together. I guess you can imagine the guilt/condemnation package that comes with such thinking. Anyway, I've been stuck and struggling, to put it mildly. I'm just so tired of being overweight and out of control."

Can you relate to her dilemma? You could substitute any number of strongholds here: "I have this fear of rejection"; "I am a compulsive perfectionist"; "I am addicted to pornog-

raphy”; “I have a fear of death”; “I have a fear of abandonment”; “I cannot forgive”; or “I have thoughts of suicide.”

Of course, these things are not solely attributed to the work of evil spirits, but for many, the influence of evil spirits is the one area that has gone unnoticed and unaddressed in the pursuit of God’s healing.

Proverbs 13:12 tells us that “hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.” Hope is confident expectation for good; the ultimate good is heaven. The Scriptures say that Christ in us is that very hope, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). Does the power of the Gospel simply offer us in our bondage the hope of heaven? No. Colossians 1:13–14 says, “He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” We have already been rescued (transferred, delivered) from one kingdom to another, yet full realization escapes us. I think of the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness. Through Moses, God had delivered them from the Egyptian taskmasters, and yet they held onto their slave mentality. A whole generation of Israelites died in the desert before the people were ready to cooperate with God, taking hold of the promises He had given them. Do you have a “slave mentality” that still needs to be defeated?

Too Disappointed to Seek Help?

Perhaps years ago you went through prayer for deliverance and it traumatized you so much that you never want to do it again. Maybe someone prayed for you and it was not successful, or those praying for you did not demonstrate love and respect when you were most vulnerable. Maybe you have a twisted idea about deliverance from evil spirits and get “weirded out” by the thought, “You mean, I might have a demon?”

Perhaps you have gone to your pastor or priest several times through the years. You have confessed your sins and received good advice—things to do, prayers to pray, encouragement to avoid evil and ways to discipline your thoughts and actions—yet your continued failure has increased your despair.

Perhaps you have been to counseling and it really helped. You now understand why you do the things you do, but the inner person has not changed. Maybe you have been to counseling for many years and very little has changed, so you no longer expect anything more than being able to cope.

You might be like many others, thinking about counseling, but because of financial restraints or pride, you never make that call for help. *I hope you make that call for help and talk to someone one more time.* We can all benefit from wise counselors who listen and understand.

Professionally trained counselors are a gift, an important resource, but there is only one Savior. It is unfortunate that pastors and church leaders feel so helpless, as if the Gospel has no power. Too many Christians are quickly turned over to professional counselors when problems surface. The power of the Gospel is much greater than that of a gifted counselor (although the two work together in a wonderful way). If counseling is needed, those in pastoral ministry need to know how to work together with the counselor to minister to the wounds of the soul.

A New Kingdom

“The time has come,” [Jesus] said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). Mark’s gospel records these as the first words Jesus spoke after His forty days in the desert. Jesus is the “new Moses,” breaking the hold of Satan and leading us out from under his dominion. Jesus is the “new Joshua” leading us into the

Kingdom of God, where God Himself is the ruler and His laws are written on our hearts.

One day friends of John the Baptist asked Jesus, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” In their presence Jesus cured many who had diseases, blindness and evil spirits. He answered, “Tell John what you have seen and heard” (see Luke 7:20–22). Those under oppression were experiencing the manifestation of the Kingdom of God. This is the Good News! The broken and oppressed, free from their bondage and sickness, were entering into the Kingdom.

In ancient times, when a king conquered a city, he sent out heralds to declare the good news: There is a new way of living; you now live under a new authority! Heralds declared the name of the new ruler and the great benefits that would come from living under his rule. Cooperating with this declaration was a matter of life and death.

The Good News is that Jesus Christ has become our King. He defeated Satan and canceled our debts. Our greatest deliverance comes from submitting to Him as our Savior. Now that we have chosen His rule and submitted to His Spirit, we no longer live under the rule of the old king. You are under a new authority; you live in a new kingdom. Liberation from the influence of evil spirits deepens as we respond to God’s initiative of taking new territory in our lives.

The Blessing of the Kingdom

Freedom from the influence of evil spirits is not an end in itself. Receiving the full blessing God has given us in His Son and becoming His disciple is. Deliverance releases us from bondage into blessing. The Hebrew sense of blessing (*baruk*) is meant to empower someone to prosper, to succeed and to thrive. All blessing finds its source in God. After creating man and woman on the sixth day God blessed them and said to

them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion . . .” (Genesis 1:28, RSV). To speak a blessing is to be God’s instrument.

In biblical times a spoken blessing was meant to bring protection and help on a journey. It was meant to provide grace for life’s journey. A blessing means to speak well of a person. It is the opposite of a curse. Awareness of God’s blessing and our need to bless others was so deeply rooted in ancient Jewish culture that the word *shalom* is still used as a form of greeting. *Shalom* means peace, completeness, harmony, health and welfare. It is summarized in the godly plan identified in Jeremiah 29:11 (RSV): “For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Here the word *shalom* is translated to the phrase “plans for welfare and not for evil.”

This is what God intended for us from the beginning, and now in Christ we have indeed received every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). The fullness of what it means to be blessed is to know Christ and the truth of our identity and destiny in Him. It is to know that He has special plans for our future.

As we seek to receive the blessing of the Father, we can look to the example of how God spoke blessing into His Son, Jesus. Before starting His public ministry, Jesus came to John to be baptized. Knowing that Jesus did not need a baptism of repentance, John said, “I need to be baptized by you” (Matthew 3:14). But Jesus had come to earth to be one of us. Though divine, He identified with our sins. The sacrificial Lamb of God came to die so that He might redeem us and be our doorway to the mercy of God. Jesus’ baptism is the first recorded act of His embracing His destiny as the saving Lamb of God. As Jesus came out of the water, the Spirit of God descended on Him, and a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). God was declaring who Jesus was and His fatherly delight in Him. Entering our world of pain and suffering, Jesus brought with Him the favor of the Father, the

Father's blessing. Romans 5:10 says Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father. This blessing that Jesus received has been imparted to us. In Christ these words, this relationship, belongs to us. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1).

Words of blessing affirm our identity and prepare us to fulfill our destiny. Each of us has a purpose, a contribution to make to the unfolding mystery of God's plan, something that will give praise and honor to the One who called us for all eternity.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the *purpose* of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:11–12, emphasis added

Liberation from spiritual bondage frees us to receive the blessing God has given us in His Son so we might live for the praise of His glory. God is pleased when we seek all that He has for us in Christ.

Hope Enough to Ask

God wants us to ask to be blessed. I love the Old Testament story of Jacob, not because he lived a spotless life, but because he so desperately wanted to be blessed. He knew God had blessed his grandfather Abraham, and he conspired with his mother to inherit the birthright from his brother Esau through trickery. After doing so he ran away from home. Years later he knew he had to return and face Esau, and here Genesis records another desperate moment in Jacob's life. In a night of agony, finally facing the truth about himself, Jacob wrestled with God (who had taken the form of a man) till daybreak (see Genesis 32:24). Realizing He could not overpower Jacob,

the Lord touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it. How strange to imagine that God could not overpower Jacob. What was it in Jacob that could not be defeated? Exhaustion must have reached every part of his mind and body, and his hip must have hurt badly, and yet he would not let go. Finally the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." Jacob replied, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." Jacob would not quit. He had wrestled with God all night, he was wounded and he refused to let go until he got his blessing. No longer would he have to rely on his own resources to prosper; in his struggle he surrendered to God's plans for his welfare and his future. God did bless him, even changing his name to Israel and making his sons the fathers of the twelve Hebrew tribes.

Are you seeking God's blessing? Does it seem like you have struggled all night—or even all your life? Perhaps you have been through hard times. Your pain has been exposed; like Jacob, you are wounded and know you will never be the same again. Perhaps it is daybreak and you are about to let go. It's time to say one more time, "I will not let You go unless You bless me."

Maybe you are saying, "I want to be free. I want to know the blessings God has planned for me, but I don't have the strength of Jacob." Be assured that God wants to meet you and work with you where you are. He wants you to turn toward Him and ask.

In a later chapter I share the story of Mike, a 26-year-old on the fast track to success. One of God's prodigal sons, his spiritual journey back to God began with a simple request, planted by a faithful Christian friend. Sensing a bit of spiritual hunger in him, she said, "Why don't you just ask Jesus to come and get you?"

This is a good place to start. Just pray, "Jesus, come and get me." Say it often. Say it out loud or silently. You may say it with other words. "Jesus, if You are real, please show me." Or there's another simple request: "Help me, Lord." Help doesn't always come when and how we expect it. Anna did not

think she would have to wait so long for an answer. Nor did she expect God to send someone halfway around the world to help her. You can be assured, though, that when you ask God hears, and His response is on the way (see Matthew 7:7).

You have to ask. No one else can ask for you. No journey to freedom takes place without the grace of God and the power of His Spirit working in you. Jesus died to save you and set you free. Freedom from the influence of evil spirits is a doorway to a deeper experience of the new life we have been given in Christ.

Read On . . .

In the next chapter we will look at the reality of our enemy, the devil, and how he wants to keep us from living out our destinies as children of God. In subsequent chapters of part 1, we will discuss five spiritual keys that free us from the bondage of evil. I use the key metaphor because of the dual purpose of keys, used both to lock and unlock doors.

Evil spirits gain influence in a life through doorways that are opened, often in childhood, by us or by other people. Through these doors Satan's lies and deceptions limit our access to the blessing of the Kingdom of God. By using the keys presented in this book, we can close the doors through which evil gains influence and at the same time open the doors through which Christ frees us and imparts blessing.

As you will see, this is not a once-in-a-lifetime grand opening—or closing. Rather, as we seek for and find new freedom, the Holy Spirit releases us from bondage at ever-deeper levels. God frees us and blesses us so that we may bless others. In part 2, I give instruction for how you can help someone else receive the gift of deliverance in Christ.

Wherever you are, just as you are, I suggest that you read on. Turning the page to chapter 2 is itself a hopeful effort. When Anna came to us she had few expectations. She came

because we had prayed with a friend, and she thought she might as well give it a try. She left with hope and a new beginning. If you read on, you will have the same opportunity Anna had. You will learn how to stir up the gift of hope, to break with attachments to things that bind you and to release those who have wounded you. You will realize that the enemy's power has been broken and that you can cooperate with God's power as He reveals His special purpose for your life.

[Jesus said,] "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

Luke 11:9-10

Lord Jesus, come and get me. Capture my heart with Your love. I do not have the strength of Jacob; give me the courage to ask for the freedom and blessings that are mine in Christ. Use this book to renew my hope and expose those areas of my life that I have not surrendered to You. Show me who I am and Your plan for my life, my identity and my destiny. Bless me so that I may be a blessing to others.