

Alive and Free

Freedom In Christ Canada

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: A STORY OF FREEDOM

In April of 1990 I was diagnosed with major clinical depression. I became increasingly despondent and began thinking of suicide as a way to gain the peace my spirit craved. I was hospitalized and developed anorexia nervosa. I was 26 years old.

The next nine years of my life were spent in and out of the hospital psychiatric wards. I received every form of treatment offered to me: medication, electroconvulsive therapy, anger management therapy and psychotherapy, but the depression remained.

Seven years into my depression, a friend who had also experienced depression recommended I read *The Bondage Breaker*. I was very offended. I had been a Christian since I was five years old. I had never heard of spiritual warfare and thought it was “far out”. I believed that spiritually everything was fine with me. I lived what I believed to be a godly life and prior to my depression was very active in my church.

A few months later, when I felt like a complete failure and undeserving of life, my sister told me about a book she had read that helped her during a difficult period in her own life. It was *Victory Over the Darkness*. I tried to read it, but never made it past chapter two.

I realize now what kept me from exploring the possibility that my depression could, in fact, have a spiritual component was pride. If I believed my illness was biochemical or emotional, then I did not have to take responsibility for allowing it to happen. I could blame it on brain chemistry or on people in my life who had hurt me or allowed me to be hurt. However, if I were to accept that my depression was caused by some spiritual deficit, then I would have to admit that I wasn't as spiritually “together” as I thought I was, and I would have to take responsibility for getting myself right

with God. It was so much easier to blame it on biochemistry, but the cure never came.

When I began to see a Christian counselor in 1998, Satan knew that I was finally beginning to understand, or at least seek the truth, and that the truth could lead to my freedom. He intensified the fight to keep me bound.

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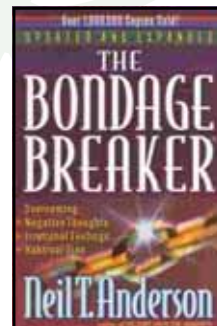
Anxiety and fear took over. I could not sleep, not even short naps without being startled awake by some frightening thought. I would wake every hour of the night afraid it was morning and I would have to live another day. I couldn't stand to be alone because of the constant terror I lived with. All day long my mind was assaulted with disturbing thoughts: I'm incurable. I'll never get better. I will feel this way for the rest of my life. I knew that I could not stand to live like this much longer, so I began contemplating a way out. I wanted to die and end the torment, but I loved my husband and kids and did not want to leave them. I heard voices in my head saying, “This depression has been hard on your family. It hurts them to watch you suffer. You have caused them enough

pain. If you were gone, Tim (my husband) could find a new, happy wife who could take care of him and your children. If you were to end your life, your family would grieve, but the pain they would experience would be nothing compared to the pain that you will have to endure if you continue to live this nightmare.” It made sense to me. I would be doing everyone a favour if I killed myself.

When I told my counselor about these thoughts and my intentions to end it all, she said she believed I was under attack from demonic forces. In all my years of therapy, I had never heard that theory before and didn't know what to make of it. She told me to read *The Bondage Breaker*, and I did.

For more than two years, the Lord had been trying to encourage me to read this very important book to show me the truth. Satan used my pride as well as lies about the nature of my illness to prevent me from discovering that truth. When I was at my lowest point, I swallowed my pride and read the book. At this time I didn't think I would ever be able to crawl out of the pit of depression. I believed I had hit rock bottom, but Satan knew I had never been closer to the top!

(testimony continued on page 3)



The Bondage Breaker is available through Freedom In Christ Canada for \$15.

The Steps to Freedom in Christ are also available at a cost of \$5.

NEW RELEASE: THE DAILY DISCIPLER

This new devotional from Neil Anderson features daily readings that will give you a solid foundation in the Christian faith.

The following excerpt is entitled '**Discipline Yourself for Godliness**'.

Scripture Reading: Daniel 1

Many recovery ministries and diet plans fail because they are based on a law concept rather than grace. Just trying to stop drinking alcohol, taking drugs and eating certain foods that you crave has not proven to be very successful. Abstinence isn't easier if those in authority require you to eat food and drink wine that is forbidden by God, as was the case for Daniel. Rather than just rebel against the king and put the king's official in a tight spot, Daniel suggested a creative alternative. As a result, the official saved face, the king was pleased, and Daniel was healthier (see Daniel 1:8-20).

The secular world says, "Work the program, the program works." There is no program that can set you free. Trying to follow a law-based program that encourages abstinence is like trying to get an old bone away from a dog. If you try to grab it, you will have a dogfight. But if you throw the dog a steak, it will spit out the old bone. The gospel is a steak served on a platter of grace.

Faith-based programs focus on teaching the truth that sets us free. No matter how

serious the addiction, true believers are still children of God who are alive in Christ and dead to sin. Believers are not addicts, alcoholics, coaddicts and coalcoholics; they are children of God, and their victory is found in their identity and position in Christ. It is counterproductive to label struggling Christians with a negative failure identity.

To believe that an alcoholic will always be an alcoholic or to believe that a sinner will always be a sinner is a denial of the gospel. On the other hand, the alcoholic and addict cannot deny their own sin if they want to experience the grace of God. Once they acknowledge their sin and invite Christ into their lives, they have been born again. And every born-again believer is a new creation in Christ. It is far better for the Christian to say, "I am a child of God who struggles with alcohol or drugs, but I am learning what it means to be alive and free in Christ."

Disciplining ourselves to abstain from things that are bad for us will not prove to be effective, but disciplining ourselves for the sake of godliness will be profitable now and for all eternity. "For physical training is of some value, but godliness

has value for all things, holding promises for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Righteous people don't focus on what they shouldn't be doing, they focus on who they are in Christ and what they should be doing. "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again" (Proverbs 24:16). When they fall, righteous people don't say, "I'm a hopeless failure who was never called to walk." They say, "Lord, I fell again. Thank you for Your forgiveness. I'm going to get back up and learn to live by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit so that I don't have to fall again." Like Daniel, they also have a creative alternative they can easily choose when tempted to sin.

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

Thought for the day:

Why is it so important to know who we are in Christ?

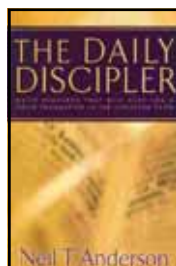


The Daily Discipler is available through Freedom In Christ Canada for \$25.

"Believers are... children of God, and their victory is found in their identity and position in Christ."

\$2 SPECIAL SAVINGS COUPON

This coupon entitles the bearer to \$2.00 off the regular price of *The Daily Discipler*. Redeem through Freedom In Christ Canada. Coupon expires March 31, 2006. (Regular price \$25.)



HOW TO ORDER:

- By phone: 306.546.2522
- By fax: 306.790.7747
- By e-mail: freedominchrist@sasktel.net

A resource list of materials available through Freedom in Christ Canada and an order form are available on our website: www.ficm.ca

FROM THE DIRECTOR, CLAY BERGEN

This past year has been an incredible year of growth for Freedom In Christ Canada. For a number of years we prayed the prayer of Jabez, "That God would bless us and enlarge our territory!" God did bless us, but not much different than other years. However, in 2005 we began to see God answer our prayer in ways that were beyond our expectations.

It all began last January when our staff prayed that we would have someone to be in our office full-time. That following Sunday I asked one of the intercessors in my church who worked in the business world if she would consider working for FIC. Her immediate response was "YES".

After a month of prayer and fasting, finishing her present job in May, and a summer of preparation, Jill Laycock began working with us in September. It has been a wonderful blessing from God to have Jill as our Ministry Administrator. It has released me to get out of the office and be more involved with helping people and churches. Jill is still in the process of raising financial support, however God continues to be faithful in taking care of her.

Our next blessing was Neil Anderson coming to Canada in May. Neil was invited to promote his new book, *The Daily Disciplex*, on 100 Huntley Street

and also to speak in three Toronto churches. The response has been fantastic with people wanting to find their freedom and be trained to help others. In fact, all the interest led to a trip back to Toronto in November to do a Discipleship Counseling seminar, which trains people to take others through *The Steps to Freedom in Christ*. We also had the opportunity to partner with 100 Huntley Street in sending out our *Who I Am In Christ* bookmark to over 30,000 homes.

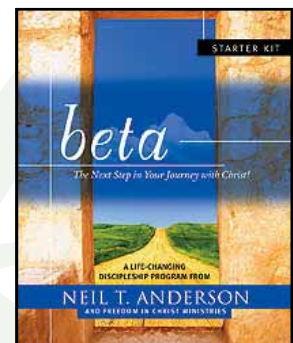
In September we moved into new offices. They are just down the hall from where we were, however it doubled our space and gave us a wonderful board/meeting room. It will be perfect to host our seminars for 10-15 people. It is indeed a blessing from God. Please stop by and visit us whenever you are in Regina.

One of the most exciting blessings has been the new churches that have begun to teach the freedom message. We have seen Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Anglican and even one United church begin *Beta* classes in their churches. Our borders are expanding! *Beta* is Neil Anderson's basic message of who we are in Christ and teaches about being free from spiritual and personal strongholds. This material is the next step for churches using *Alpha*, which has been an open door for our ministry.

We praise God for these opportunities to help people across Canada find their freedom. Our challenge for 2006 is to teach individuals and churches how to use the steps to freedom more effectively. Please partner with us through prayer and financial support to help captives be set free by understanding their identity in Christ.



Beta supplies simple, practical guidance to help Christians weave faith into every aspect of their lives.



The Beta Starter Kit includes a Student's Guide, Leader's Guide, and DVDs. A \$110 value for \$100.

(Items may also be purchased individually.)

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: A STORY OF FREEDOM (FROM PAGE 1)

My counselor and I prayed about this. She called two prayer chains to pray for me. I reached out to my church for prayer, and my eyes were opened to the power of prayer. The change in me was miraculous! I no longer had thoughts of suicide, the anxiety disappeared, I was able to sleep peacefully, and I was able to be alone without fear or panic.

Two weeks later my counselor led me through *The Steps to Freedom in Christ*. I went home a changed woman. I was free from depression.

I had spent 80 weeks in hospital psychiatric wards, been treated with more than 20 medications, and received approximately 200 electroconvulsive treatments. All that ended the day I stepped into freedom, and I remain free to this day!

Through prayer counseling, God helped me uncover the roots of my depression. I discovered that hurtful events in my childhood had caused me to believe a number of lies. God revealed truth to replace the lies I had believed for so long. I repented of them and my life has been transformed.

Depression stole nine years of my life, but because of the lessons I learned through these experiences, I consider depression to have been one of the greatest blessings of my life.



If this testimony has blessed or encouraged you, please let us know. We'd love to hear from you!

Freedom In Christ Canada

Equipping the Body of Christ.

Box 33115
Regina, SK S4T 7X2

Phone: 306-546-2522
Fax: 306-790-7747

E-mail: freedominchrist@sasktel.net
Web site: www.ficm.ca

If you would like to receive our newsletter electronically, please send us an e-mail at freedominchrist@sasktel.net to be added to our contact list.



Founded by Dr. Neil T. Anderson in 1989, Freedom In Christ is a ministry that equips believers to live righteous lives in Christ. When Christians resolve their personal and spiritual conflicts and understand their identity and position in Christ, they are able to stop the cycle of sin and despair and live in victory.

Freedom In Christ is an international, interdenominational ministry which exists to glorify God by prayerfully and strategically equipping and resourcing churches, Christian organizations and mission groups in keeping with the Great Commandment in order to accomplish the Great Commission.

The Word of God is the authority by which we live. By understanding from God's Word the truth of our identity, position, purpose, authority and protection in Christ, we can reclaim our spiritual heritage. When Christians resolve personal and spiritual conflicts and understand their identity in Christ, they are able to stop the cycle of sin and despair and live in victory.

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FREEDOM IN CHRIST CANADA
Box 33115, Regina, SK S4T 7X2
Phone: (306) 546-2522
e-mail: freedominchrist@sasktel.net

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