

This lesson may be the most intensely healing in this series. God is so good!

Blessings & MYESE!

Part 29: Elevate Your Life!

Texts:

Ephesians 2:6 (NIV) - *"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."*

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) - "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

We continue the "Soul Detox" series:

Toxic Emotions: Control Them Before They Control You!

A. God created mankind as emotional beings.

1. Because we have emotions, we can love, laugh, and be excited or peaceful.
2. Who would want to live in a world where there was no love? Love causes us to cherish family, friends, and relationships.
3. Who would want to live in a world without humor, smiles, and laughter?
4. Life begins with a poor balance of emotions and intellect.
 - a. Babies are all about emotion. When well fed, they're happy; when thirsty or hungry, life goes downhill really fast!

- b. If they sleep well, they're all smiles. But if tired, they quickly turn grumpy. Keep them entertained, and they love it. But if they become bored or feel neglected, they feel mistreated.
5. With age, we learn to balance emotions with intellect. Even though we feel hungry, we refuse to throw a temper tantrum if lunch is just an hour or so away—or hopefully, we don't!
6. As we grow, we also develop a greater range of emotions.
7. Unfortunately, some adults allow emotions to control their lives.
 - a. (See sleeping baby: <http://youtu.be/SKuFcwxI1Vg>).
8. Men are often accused of having emotional shutdowns, but we usually protest that's not true. Our emotions are just aroused by different things.
9. **Joke:** Male Emotions

One night a young mom discovered her husband standing over their baby's crib.

As she silently watched him staring at their sleeping infant, she detected a mixture of emotions: wonder, amazement, disbelief, doubt, delight, enchantment, skepticism.

Touched by this unusual display of tenderness and deep emotions, with tearful eyes she slipped her arm around his waist and whispered, "A penny for your thoughts."

"It's amazing!" he replied. "I just can't see how anybody could make a crib like this for only \$45."

- B. The enemy tries to hijack the emotions meant to make life enjoyable and cause them to make life miserable.
 1. We must learn to recognize when our emotions are becoming toxic.
 2. Here are some toxic emotions we must deal with:
 - a. Fear
 - b. Negativity
 - c. Shame, caused by low self-esteem

- d. Unforgiveness
- e. Anger
- f. Arrogance and pride
- g. Bitterness
- h. Self-pity
- i. Lack of compassion and empathy for others
- j. Jealousy

C. While God is the Author of human emotions, toxic emotions do not originate from Him.

1. He wants our lives to be filled with joy, contentment, and peace.
2. **John 10:10 (NKJV)** - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
3. Toxic emotions prompt us to make illogical decisions.
 - a. This reminds me of the man at the Pool of Bethesda. After missing a few opportunities, rational thinking should have made him conclude that he must properly position himself.
 - b. Imagine waiting **38 years** for someone to help him get into the pool.Get serious!
4. In Jacob's life, many examples are given of how toxic emotions affected his judgment. But nothing could have been more painful than watching those same emotions being passed to his children.
5. The fact that dysfunction can be passed to our children is a major reason for "soul detox."
6. After experiencing all those years of insecurity, self-doubt, and anger linked to sibling rivalry—and being the son who was **not** favored, you would think Jacob would treat his children with equality. But the same bad blood between Jacob and Esau, caused by their father's favoritism to

Esau, was extended to Jacob's sons. They hated Joseph for being their father's favorite.

7. Just as Isaac's partiality toward Esau caused regret and pain in his latter years, so did Jacob regret the favoritism he had shown Joseph.
8. Not only did he grieve all those years for the son he thought was dead, upon discovering he was still alive, Jacob realized that his favoritism had caused so much hatred for Joseph, his sons had actually planned to kill him—but then decided to sell him into slavery!

D. Toxic emotions are harmful because of the misery produced in us and those we love—plus the fact that it is the work of the enemy.

1. **Fear:** a very toxic emotion that prevents us from trusting in God's care for us.
2. **Shame:** the result of low self-esteem and not accepting the identity given to us by God—which is a form of self-will.
3. **Unforgiveness:** rooted in disappointment, the result is a wounding of our self-esteem. If we fail to ignore what others say or do to us, we will begin to question who we are and the identity God designed for us.
4. **Anger:** the result of disappointment, betrayal, and not forgiving those who wronged us.
5. **Negativity:** the result of living with fear, wounded self-esteem and unresolved anger
6. **Arrogance and pride:** two coping mechanisms we develop to hide our insecurities.
7. **Bitterness:** the result of being hurt, refusing to forgive those who wronged us, becoming angry, and then failing to let it go.
8. **Self-pity:** the result of living with disappointment and bitterness.
9. **Shutdown of emotions:** if we continue to relive a disappointment, wrong or hurt, we can become oblivious to the pain of others and feel no

compassion or empathy for them. This can also happen when we forget God's blessings and focus on materialism, rather than helping others.

10. **Jealousy**: the result of low self-esteem and being dissatisfied with who you are.

E. Salvation was not meant to merely heal the damaged emotions of living in a fallen world, but to also impart the knowledge of how to deal with our wounds.

1. The purpose for Christ's coming was not just to save us from an eternity without Him, but to make life on earth rewarding and fulfilling.

2. **Romans 14:17 (NKJV)** - "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

a. Notice that two-thirds of God's Kingdom deals with the emotions!

3. **1 Peter 1:8 (NKJV)** - "Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory..."

4. **Philippians 4:7 (NKJV)** - "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

5. **Psalms 16:11 (NKJV)** - "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

F. Perhaps the worst damage produced by toxic emotions is failing to comprehend our identity in Christ and that while some people may fail us, God never will.

1. Life's painful situations must never affect our relationships with those who have never hurt us—and certainly not our relationship with God!

2. Because certain individuals have disappointed and made us feel worthless and small, we must not assume that others will do the same. That is judging—which scripture forbids us to do.

3. If we find it hard to give or express love, how then can we fulfill Christ's new commandment of loving one another?

- a. **John 13:34-35 (NIV)** - "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
 4. If **anyone** knows all our weaknesses and failures, it would be God. Yet He never finds fault, looks down on us, or withholds His love from us. Others may fail to show that we matter to them, but not our Heavenly Father.
 5. Learn to process disappointments. Remember that fallen man is responsible for hurting us and that in spite of our pain, we must never allow it to diminish our true identity or value. We will always be who GOD says we are—not men.
 6. Do not allow those who fail to see your value determine your true worth.
 7. Several years ago, a Houston flea market dealer sold for \$5 what appeared to be an ordinary rock—yet it was valued at an incredible \$10,000,000!
 - a. If I remember correctly, the buyer recognized it as a very large, rare, unpolished gemstone—a huge star sapphire.
 - b. The dealer who failed to recognize its value was the one who felt sick. He even tried to sue the buyer, but the courts dismissed the case.
 8. When people fail to understand your value, simply ignore them. God calls you *His treasure!*
 - a. **Psalms 135:4 (NIV)** - "For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession."
- G. Notice the significant role toxic emotions played in Jacob's life, even to the point of affecting his relationship with God.
1. Jacob never considered himself to be God's 'treasured possession.'

2. From the title used in scripture, we often call Jehovah "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." However, Jacob described Him as "the God of Abraham and Isaac" with no reference to Jehovah being **his** God.
3. Rather than feeling loved and accepted, Jacob feared his father.
 - a. In the dispute with Laban that led to the parting of their ways, Jacob actually built a memorial and took an oath not to harm Laban in the name of "the Fear of his father Isaac!"
 - b. **Genesis 31:53b (NIV)** - "So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac."
4. In the same manner Jacob feared his earthly father, the strongest authority figure in a young Hebrew child's life, he also portrayed his feelings for our Heavenly Father. He was terrified of God!
 - a. **Genesis 28:16-17 (KJV)** - "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was AFRAID, and said, How DREADFUL is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."
 - b. When he awoke, you would think Jacob would have been ecstatic about the words God had spoken to him. But his terror never allowed him to recognize the fact that he was loved by God.
 - c. He continued to view himself as the 'heel grabber,' and the 'little cheat' who was so unworthy of God's favor and blessings, at any moment he could be exposed as a fraud!
5. He never knew how much God really loved him.
 - a. **Malachi 1:1-2 (NKJV)** - "The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. "I have loved you," says the LORD." Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved;"
 - b. God often expressed His love for Israel, yet they continually questioned it. Essentially, He was saying, "You are doing exactly what Jacob did—and I loved him, too!"

- c. Rather than accept God's love, Jacob asked, "In what way have You loved me, God?"
 6. His ability to receive from God was also affected.
 - a. Now you understand why Jacob, in Genesis chapter 28, could not accept the blessings God had pronounced over his life.
 - b. This is why he felt constrained to 'wrestle' with God to gain the blessings that had already been pronounced over him 22 years ago at Bethel.
- H. How then must we conquer these emotions which are some of the most painful, destructive ordeals a human being could ever experience?
 1. First, understand that toxic emotions are the product of toxic thoughts. It's those debilitating, gut-wrenching, overwhelming emotions we feel when we remember a terrible experience from the past.
 2. Because toxic emotions are the result of toxic thoughts, it's imperative to bring our thought life under control.
 3. If we constantly recall a situation over and over again, the accompanying emotions will attach themselves to those thoughts.
 4. This is why certain songs can attach themselves to particular events in our lives. When we hear the song, it immediately floods our mind with those emotions.
 5. The first December after the death of my dad, I walked into a restaurant in Nairobi and heard Bing Crosby's recording, "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas."
 - a. When I was a kid, my dad loved that song. He not only sang like Bing Crosby, he even *looked* like him.
 - b. All the feelings of love, appreciation and gratitude I had for my father, along with all the sorrow and bereavement began flooding my soul at that very moment.

- c. Rather than being toxic, the song associated with my dad's home-going evoked precious memories and emotions that were dear to my heart. This can happen with both bad and good memories.
6. Thoughts affect our emotions. Thinking the right things can cause us to be happy, fulfilled, and contented—even when circumstances are not the best.
7. On the other hand, we can be blessed beyond measure with a wonderful life, a great family and an incredible job, but still be unhappy, sad, angry, and discontented if we do not carefully guard our thoughts.

I. How can we exchange toxic emotions for healthy ones?

1. Once again, it begins with changing our thought life.
 - a. Neurologists say that if it could be mapped out, thoughts grow in the brain like a neurological tree.
 - b. To replace the old destructive tree, you must grow a new one by thinking new thoughts.
2. Then you must learn to reject hurtful emotions. Toxic emotions are the bad fruit produced by the tree of toxic thoughts.
3. Instead of learning to accept and live with unhappiness, begin to confess how blessed, fulfilled and happy you are!
4. How can that be done? Count your blessings! Considering what might be our very worst and most difficult time, most of us are still blessed beyond measure!
5. Think about it: God loves you! That fact alone is incredible!
6. Second: God loves you so much, He gave His only begotten Son for you!
7. You have been saved from sins and born again! Doesn't that add a wonderful perspective to everything?
8. After being diagnosed with cancer, my dad refused to feel sad about dying. He asked us kids, "What? Am I supposed to fear going to Heaven?"