



Week 7

Moving in Faith - Trusting Absolutely

You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! The good, the right, the true – these are the actions appropriate for daylight hours, figure out what will please Christ and then do it. Ephesians 4:8-10 (The Message)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Living Free Course

- Recovering the Adventure of the Kingdom.
- Overcoming resistances.
- Practising Repentance.
- Living free in faith, intimacy and obedience.
- Asking the right questions.
- The danger of becoming 'religious'

1.2 Baptismal identity and the battle for the mind.

- the three tenses of salvation.
 - o I have been saved
 - o I am being saved
 - o I will be saved
- Repentance must become a lifestyle
- We must learn to live in the truth on a daily and consistent basis. The replacement or restoration is the key and all the means of grace and spiritual disciplines will be necessary as we learn to live in freedom.
- Freedom and maturity in Christ could be described as the 'state of the soul when it lives, thinks, sees, chooses and feels in harmony with God's character and Word of truth. The lies of the enemy find access where we live, think, see, choose, feel in harmony with satan's lies and opinions.
- The primary battle ground is the mind.
Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. Romans 12:2

- Humbly living in a community committed to living in the Truth and in the light of Christ from time to time paying attention to all that hinders and entangles in order to run free.

2. Forgiveness

2.1 Jesus warns ominously about the danger of unforgiveness

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matthew 6:12

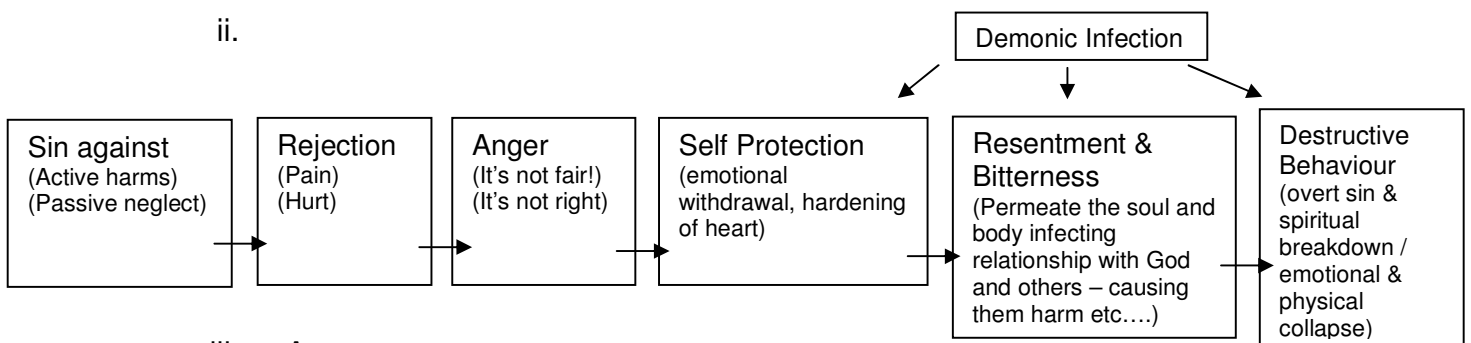
Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart. Matthew 18:32-35

2.2 Breaking the unforgiveness cycle

- Satan seeks to provoke anger within us to trap us in the cycle of sin → anger → unforgiveness

John Bevere calls this scheme 'Satan's Bait'

ii.



iii. Anger

Anger itself originates in the character of God and is a reaction to injustice, oppression and sin and leads to a passion for change and holiness.

Exodus 34:6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness"

2.3 Principles of Forgiveness

- (1) Ask for the revelation of the Holy Spirit – of anger and bitterness in your heart. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24*
- (2) Embrace emotional honesty. Dare to see the anger and bitterness you would much prefer not to be there!

(3) Do not presume the person you are angry with today is the real reason you are angry! Ask the Lord 'Why am I angry?'

(4) Name the sin of the person done against you. Do not minimize it. Call it by the real name (e.g. betrayal, abuse, manipulation, rejection, prejudice...)

(5) If feelings rise up: anger / rage, pain / hurt it is good and proper to express them

BUT:

Don't be derailed

Don't get stuck in them

Don't stop the process

Remember: forgiveness is a transaction of the will and the mind and the emotions follow later

Forgiveness releases heavenly blessing – Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:37-39

Forgiveness breaks the destructive soul ties / inappropriate influence and sets us free.

Forgiveness enables deliverance and healing to take place.

(6) 4 key attitudes that resist granting forgiveness:

Vengeance: "I want him to pay"

Self justification "I will forgive when they change", "I am entitled to be angry, don't you know what she did..."

Self righteousness: "I am in the right, I want my justice"

Self Pity / victim mindset: "But it's too painful to forgive, you can't expect me to just let it go"

All of these are expressions of pride and rebellion in our hearts and a profound lack of gratitude for our own forgiveness by God.

(7) Forgiveness is a matter of obedience, humility and faith in our relationship with the Lord

Forgiveness does not mean:

Pretending the injustice did not happen

Forgetting it

Saying sorry

Feeling love for the offender

It does mean cancelling the debt that person owes you for their cruelty... the debt signifies that which the person should have done or said according to God's standard of truth and love.

We therefore cancel the debt, placing the person into the Lord's hands for him to deal with.

We chose to treat them as if they had acted properly towards us, and we give up our right to exact justice or revenge or to get them to realize how wrong they were. (This does not mean we won't address the problem with them but that we do so having released them in our hearts).

Imagine living with one of our hands tied by a strong cord (the debt against us) to a big wheelbarrow full of sand (violation against us). We have to push that thing around with us everywhere we go. How easy is that? Yet this is a reasonable picture of the spiritual burden unforgiveness imposes on us. Forgiving means taking a sword (our willingness to forgive because of the love, grace, mercy and shed blood of Jesus Christ) and severing that cord, dropping the load of debt, and leaving it behind. What a relief! We entrust ourselves – and the offender/ offending situation – to God, while we are cut loose – literally – from carrying a load of unforgiveness toward the debt and debtor. We are free!

(8) Make a decision to bless the person in prayer, with your will done if necessary.

(9) Give up the desire / right / intention to:

Seek the persons' approval (especially true regarding mothers / fathers)

Rescue them from their own problems (the Lord will guide you how to love them)

Entrust yourself into God's hands for:

Healing

Protection

Blessing

(10) Ask forgiveness for your own:

Anger

Bitterness

Self justification

Self righteousness

Self protection

Self pity

(11) Rebuke the energizing work of the enemy in your heart. Remember forgiveness is a process and takes us down through layers within our hearts.

2.4 Practical Exercise

(1) Ask the Lord for one significant person to forgive

(2) Write out / express on paper / name what was done against you and how you feel about them

(3) Dear Heavenly Father,

I acknowledge to you today the sin done against me by..... (name the sin before the Lord)

What you did to me was wrong and it was sinful.

I choose today to cancel the debt you owe me; I release you from my judgment and place you into the Lord's hands.

I forgive you. I bless you (in your own words).

I sever the destructive soul tie with you and I choose not to make you pay, seek your approval or rescue you from your own problems. I choose to rise up and transcend your sin and move on in my life in obedience to my God.

I repent of my own anger and bitterness (name any other sin reactions towards the person) and receive your forgiveness.

I rebuke the spirit of anger, bitterness, resentment...and I crush you under my heel and send you vile spirit to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Lord I ask you to come and heal me, restore me and revive me, to flood my soul with your life and peace and I choose to walk in to your freedom and grace for the days ahead.

Amen.

(4) Ask the Lord for revelation from him how to treat / handle the person in the days ahead (especially if they do not change!)

3. Rejection

We belong to a society that values winning and worships winners. We live under a world system that chooses favorites and rejects seconds. We learn, pretty much from birth, that the most popular, the most attractive and the most talented are 'in'. Those who don't fit that description (most of us) are 'out'. And so, before even a specific action or attitude is leveled against us, the stage is set for each of us to live life battling rejection.

Rejection is foundational to many strongholds, sins and dysfunctions. This is because rejection affects a person's entire personality. It not only come against an individual, but it works against all of a person's relationships: marriage, family, ministry, work and social life. The stage is already set by the world system, which we know to be under the direction of Satan himself, the 'accuser of the brethren' (Revelation 12:10), when each of us begin to make our way in life. We yearn for love and acceptance, but we receive rejection along the way instead. We learn to believe the lies fed to us about our own value, our own significance and the love of God, our Heavenly Father.

However, if we are in Christ, we do not need to participate in this world system. We are not of this world! (Ephesians 2:12-13; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11). We have not been rejected; we have been ACCEPTED (Romans 15:7). There is NOTHING that can separate us from the love of our Father (Romans 8:38-39), and we must not buy into the lies that tell us otherwise. Instead, we must face those lies squarely, identify what they are and where they come from, and destroy them utterly with the sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of God.

Roots of Rejection:

- Absent fathers or mothers.
- Lack of bonding with parents.
- Parents' divorce.
- Not being wanted as a child; 'wrong' gender.
- Adoption.
- Competition with siblings.
- Various forms of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual).
- Parents' addictions.
- Shame of a family member.
- Constant fighting or strife.
- Unjust discipline.
- Disinterest in a child's activities.
- Various means and degrees of neglect/ abandonment.
- Living with physical defect or handicap.
- Discontent with one's appearance.
- Sense of failure or inadequacy; lack of confidence in abilities.
- Infidelity of a spouse.
- Divorce.
- Breaking off of an engagement or other significant relationship.
- Loss of valued employment.
- Betrayal by a loyal friend.
- Unexpected, premature death of a loved one.
- Spiritual abuse, hurt or betrayal in a church.

Fruits of Rejection:

- Causes people to rely on their own coping mechanisms (false comforts), instead of on the truth, power and strength of God's Holy Spirit.
- Breeds rebellion (rejection results in rebellion) including aggressive attitudes, foul language, stubbornness, defiance, fighting and abusive actions.
- Fosters pride, egotism and arrogance.
- Feeds control, manipulation and possessiveness.
- Compels people to reject others.
- Causes people to refuse comfort from others.
- Promotes harshness, skepticism and unbelief.
- Leads to self-rejection (low self-image, inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, sorrow, grief).
- Causes self-accusation and self-condemnation.
- Energizes an inability or refusal to communicate (it is difficult to talk through issues with a person who is suffering from deep rejection).
- Stirs up and feeds fears, anxieties, worries, negativity and pessimism.
- Spawns depression, hopelessness and despair.
- Triggers self-destructive thoughts and actions.
- Fuels performance-based life, relationships and ministry.
- Energizes over-achievement, striving, competition and perfectionism.
- Drives people into withdrawal, isolation or independence.
- Nurtures self-protection, self-centeredness, selfishness, self-justification, self-idolatry and self-pity (note that it's all about SELF!).
- Feeds a critical spirit, judgmental attitudes, envy, jealousy and covetousness.
- Keeps people locked in emotional immaturity.

Recognising Rejection:

- I usually interpret things that could be either positive or negative as negative.
- I receive what others say to me through a lens of rejection.
- I'm assaulted with paralyzing thoughts such as, 'I can't do that!'; 'How would that appear to (person)?'; 'What will (person) think?'.
- I second-guess what I have said or done, and I have negative thoughts about what others must think about me as a result.
- I find it difficult to freely reach out and exercise my spiritual gifts.
- I often try to 'do too much' or go from thing to thing, job to job, ministry to ministry, striving to earn favour and acceptance from God and/or others.
- I find it difficult to accept freely from others, or to demonstrate love and affection.
- I don't believe people when they pay me a compliment.

- I have a tendency to doubt, to question or to mistrust authority.
- I tend to be skeptical and unbelieving.
- People could describe me as harsh.
- I struggle to control foul language and abusive speech, especially when I am angry.
- When confronted about something, my immediate reaction is defensive or even defiant.
- I do not share my testimony, or the Gospel with the unsaved.
- I am afraid that I, or my loved ones, have not been chosen by God for salvation.
- I need to control my family in order for them to be safe, to succeed and so they will love and appreciate me.
- I am possessive in relationships.
- I have a low estimation of my own appearance, my abilities and my adequacy to succeed in life and ministry.
- I am prone to depression.
- I am often fearful and anxious about things such as: how people will regard me or my children; how my efforts (or another's) will turn out; how I will be provided for and protected etc.
- I need to be needed, so I continually place myself in situations where I feel others cannot get along without my help, my presence, my abilities, my ministry etc.
- I am inhibited in honestly sharing my deepest feelings with others, even with those who are close to me;
- I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my wife, my husband, my friend..., I will appear weak and lose my place of authority and respect in their eyes.
- I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my husband, my wife, my friend..., they will take advantage of me and exploit my weakness.
- I am both critical and envious at the same time toward others who are more confident, who are able to express themselves freely, or who have more friendships and opportunities than I think I do.
- I am competitive and ambitious. I think that if people won't love me, at least they will admire me.
- I find comfort in isolation; others might consider me a 'loner'.

False Rejection:

The rejection issues noted above have their roots in reality – the offenses that created the sense of rejection really did happen. Two forms of rejection that are not based in reality are *perceived* rejection and *feared* rejection. These are pure demonic lies convincing a person that rejection is present – or pending – when it is not. This can paralyze us in life, strip us of joy, and compel us to be always on guard against what others may be thinking.

Perceived Rejection:

- I think people are always talking about me when they are not.
- I believe there are conspiracies against me when there are not.
- I usually interpret things that could be either positive or negative as negative.
- I receive what others say to me through a lens of rejection.
- Feared (suspected) rejection:
 - I am assaulted frequently with paralyzing thoughts such as, 'I can't do that!', 'How would that appear to (person)?', 'What will (person) think if I wear this, do this, say that?'
 - I am unable to freely reach out and exercise my spiritual gifts (to minister helps or mercy, to speak words of exhortation and encouragement etc.)
 - I try to do 'too much', or I go from endeavour to endeavour, job to job, or ministry to ministry, striving to earn favour and acceptance from God and others.
 - I do not experience intimacy with God in prayer or personal worship, because I think God will reject me.
 - I am inhibited in corporate worship, because I am concerned about what others may think about me.
 - I am possessive in relationships.
 - I have a low estimation of my own appearance, my abilities and my adequacy to succeed in life and ministry.
 - I am prone to depression.
 - I am often fearful and anxious about various things.
 - I need to be needed, so I continually place myself in situations where I feel others cannot get along without my help, my presence, my abilities etc.
 - I am inhibited in honestly sharing my deepest feelings with others, even with those who are close to me.
 - I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my wife, my husband, my friend..., I will appear weak and lose my place of authority and respect in their eyes.
 - I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my husband, my wife, my friend..., they will take advantage of me and exploit my weakness.
 - I am both critical and envious at the same time toward others who are more confident, who are able to express themselves freely, or who have more friendships and opportunities than I think I do.
 - I am competitive and ambitious. I think that if people won't love me, at least they will admire me.
 - I find comfort in isolation; others might consider me a 'loner'.
 - I do not extend comfort or encouragement to others, even if I sense that they need it.
 - I do not step out in faith and boldness, because I fear I might mess up, or that people won't receive what I have to offer.

Real Solution:

When we are faced with fear of rejection, the temptation is to fall back to coping mechanisms we may have employed for most, if not all, of our lives. These can include anything we have learned to use or to do to comfort ourselves in the face of rejection or other hurts. We should recognise our coping mechanisms as 'false comforts', like a placebo, they trick us into thinking we've dealt with the symptoms of our pain, when in truth they do nothing to solve the problem.

God's 'coping mechanism' for rejection is threefold:

(1) Grant forgiveness and extend blessings to people who have hurt or rejected you (real or perceived). Do the same toward situations and environments from which hurt and rejection continue to flow. Remember that Satan wants to stimulate bitterness, resentment and anger in you. Our refusal to forgive hurts becomes a toxin or a cancer that defiles not only us but also many around us. This is why the Scriptures repeatedly address the issue of granting forgiveness.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:12, 14-15

On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:20-21

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 4:31-32; 5:1-2

(2) Be confident of God's great, unconditional and infinite love for you. God did not make a mistake when He made you! His great love is demonstrated through Jesus' death on the cross and through His continual faithfulness and devotion to you. As you reject and demolish any strongholds and demonic lies of rejection, replace them with the truth of God's great love for you.

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

(3) Live in these truths. This means acting on faith, not our feelings! It will mean behaving lovingly and confidently even when we fear people will reject us: parents, friends, children, co-workers, neighbours and church family. It will mean forgiving and going on, even when they do reject us.

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:15-18

Walking in the Truth:

- I will immerse myself in the truth of God's word about who I really am: how much He loves me, accepts me and demonstrated His faithfulness to me. I will not accept the lies of the enemy, perhaps planted into my mind and reinforced since childhood, that I am unloved, unaccepted, unworthy and rejected.
- I will treat other people according to the truth of God's word, not on the basis of my own fears, hurts and insecurities: I will forgive. I will extend blessing. I will freely love and accept others.
- I will offer encouragement, blessing and affection to others.
- I will express my thoughts and feelings to others honestly without fear of rejection.
- I will no longer resort to rebellion to express my anger over feeling rejected.
- For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. 1 Samuel 15:23
- I will no longer try to 'do' for others, so they will love and accept me. I will minister with my spiritual gifts according to the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.
- I will not fear weakness and vulnerability with my spouse. I will trust God to support me.
- I will not be critical of those who I feel have rejected me, or those who I regard as walking in greater freedom, acceptance or confidence than me.
- I will form attitudes, initiate actions and speak words that will comfort and encourage others.
- I will not seek comfort in self-pity or isolation.
- I will 'be myself', enjoying and becoming more comfortable with how God made me.
- I will share my faith in Jesus Christ whenever and with whomever the Holy Spirit gives opportunity.

Don't forget these:

- Repent** and ask forgiveness of any and all attitudes and actions associated with **rejection**.
- Receive** the infilling and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Seek it and depend on it at all times; determine not to settle for false comforts!
- Rebuke** and renounce the lies and influences related to **rejection**.
- Receive** the work that God has done and is doing in us (and live in it) in faith!
- Replace** lies with truth, confidence and **security in God's love for us**, continually renewing our minds with His word and in His spirit.