



UPROOTED

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A NOTE FROM ME TO YOU

This seven day bible study was written just for you. Lots of late nights and nap time writing sessions were used to compile this study. I want you to know that you have been prayed for and thought about.

My hope is that this next week will offer you some valuable insight. Insight that will inspire you to dig in deep and rip out the roots of bondage on your life. Jesus offers us living water. Water that is used to clean the roots from the dirt that tries to hang on once they have been exposed. Remember, He is a gentleman. He comes to clean us, not expose us and leave us raw and uncovered. He comes to restore and redeem us.

Seeing God come in to relationship with individuals is my life's passion! Once a woman receives the freedom she so desperately desires, things began to change. Not only in her life but in the lives that surround her.

You may have heard the phrase "*hurt people hurt people*". Well, at the end of this study I want your focus to be on the phrase "*loved people love people*". We will tackle big topics this week such as offense, unforgiveness, rejection, comparison, and more.

But before we begin I want you to understand something very important. When you believe a lie, you have believed the liar. You have aligned your thinking with his therefore giving the liar power and authority in your life. Scripture tells us that satan is the father of lies. His mission is to keep you believing every lie he feeds you.

I've been sent to set the table, prepare the meal, and introduce to you the most beautiful feast of freedom you could ever set your eyes upon. That the taste of a clear mind, settled heart, and joyful soul will break cycles of self doubt and some serious unlovable self talk. Come and dine with me. Will you? God wants to rid you of the roots. He wants you whole like he intended you to be. He wants you to understand just how much he loves you.

I'm praying for you.

DAY 1

“A LOVE THAT PROPELS”

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

John 4:9-11 (NIV)

The day had finally come. She had heard about this man for a while now. The one that could heal bodies and turn water into wine. His smile was infectious and his stories were mesmerizing. He loved the unlovable and touched the untouchable.

She was untouchable.

For as long as she could remember she was seen as unclean. An embarrassment in her culture and had since grown weary from seeing doctor after doctor.

She was unfixable.

After spending her entire life's savings on medical visits in hopes that she would get her healing, overhearing that Jesus was coming into town was the best news of her life! It was her chance to be free from the torment her body had enslaved her with. She had been bleeding for twelve years.

She was finally hopeful.

As this smiling man approached the city her heart began to race. She began to tell herself, *“If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.”* The people began to swarm him upon his arrival. They didn't notice her slip in behind him. She pushed her hand in the crowd toward Jesus and with more faith than ever before she touched his robe.

Her body began to feel different instantly. Her legs were not achy from the constant fatigue and her lower abdomen was finally still.

She was healed.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.” Then the woman, seeing that she

could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. (Luke 8:45-48)"

She wasn't asking Jesus for His attention or even to stop! All she needed was just one touch. And that's all it took! Her faith actually moved the spirit of God that was resting upon Jesus without him even having to say a word.

Love propelled God's spirit forward.

This woman who did not want to be noticed was now front and center, trembling on her knees before the Lord. All of the pain, rejection, and stigma was now replaced with love, acceptance, and praise.

Jesus came to the earth to give us an example in how to live and love.

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:28-31

The two greatest commandments are entirely focused around love. One of the greatest weapons we have been given to war against the powers of darkness is love!

Have you ever watched the bobsledding event during the winter Olympics? The sledders once inside of the fiberglass sled rapidly descend a mountain in hopes that their time will win them the gold medal. Every single move these men and women make is vital to the success of their trip down the mountain. As they sit huddled together in the sled they must coordinate their body movements together in unity. If one leans around a corner they must all lean. If one doesn't the traction from the air zipping around their helmets can slow them down. Unity is key when bobsledding.

This is the mental image I get when I think of leaning into God's love to propel you forward. It requires individual sacrifice in order to create unity with others. Leaning in to God's love is not only just for your benefit. Jesus specifically tells us that we must love the Lord our God first and then love our neighbors as we love ourselves. The two go hand in hand. When we stand unified in love, God's spirit is able to move freely.

Colossians 12:3-14 (NIV) reads, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a

grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity”

Today we must make a choice to be propelled forward by God’s great love for us. Just like the woman’s act of faith that propelled God’s love forward may we lean into Him, push past the fear, and let God’s love heal us and those around us.

Each day this week we will go over some of the most dangerous and life-threatening root systems. Our lives, if not propelled forward by love, will fall into the traps set to ensnare us.

Like the woman above with a past and a problem, let’s lean in and touch Jesus.

Let’s rip out anything holding us back and set our minds on freedom.

QUESTIONS

1. What does it tangibly look like to be daily propelled by love?

3. Read 1 John 3:16-18. What action in our lives does this passage demand of us?

4. What fear is holding you back from reaching out and touching Jesus?

PRAYER

Lord I thank you for your abundant love. I thank you for being faithful to extend grace to me as you sent your son to die on the cross for my sins.

I pray that you would teach me how to love my enemies. Help my actions be derived from a loving heart. Let your love propel me to love you back and love others well.

I pray that you would speak to me this week as I invite you in. That I would become free from the sin cycles in my life. Thank you for the promise you gave us in your word that as we draw close to you, you in turn draw close to us.

AMEN

DAY 2

“FEAR”

*“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”
2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)*

*“Everything you hear and receive into your life gets filtered by love or fear.
Everything that flows from us is effected by love or fear.
Our reaction and response to all the issues around us either take place out of
love or fear.”
- Bill Johnson, Senior pastor at Bethel Church*

There are two different types of people in the world. Those that are motivated by love and then those that are controlled and manipulated by fear.

The most repeated command in all of scripture is the command, “Do not fear.” The reason that it’s so important that we understand this command is because satan’s goal is to dislocate us from the father. He cannot take us away from the God but he can render us useless due to a mind that is a slave to fear.

“And great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear...” Isaiah 54:13-14

The key to keeping yourself free from oppression is to not fear. When you believe a lie, you have believed the liar. You have aligned your thinking with his therefore giving the liar power and authority in your life. Scripture tells us that satan is the father of lies. His mission is to keep you believing every lie he feeds you.

Two things we should remember: Feeling fear is not a sin but embracing it is.

When we squash the lie and choose to not embrace fear we are reminding the enemy that he will never win. Grace is what empowers us to conquer fear. Jesus conquered death on the cross therefore giving you and I a spirit of power, love, and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7) in return as a gift.

When I first became a mom I had a mom friend that was deathly afraid of animals. Every time an animal would come near to her children she would panic and force her children behind her. Even if the animal was far away she would make known

the animals presence to her children, warning them about all the things that could go wrong, and then proceeded to stay as far away as possible.

Not only was my friend completely gripped with irrational fear but she was teaching her children to fear what she did by using fear as a manipulator. She didn't calmly give the facts about the animal, tell her child the rules in order to stay safe, and then observe to allow the child to form his/her own emotions. Instead she embraced her fear and ran wild in panic using her fear as a tool to cause the same reaction in her children.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.” 1 John 4:18-19, 20-21

Perfect love is a love that has been made complete. Complete love is not only when I have discovered love from the Father but when I have discovered his love and then I give it away to my neighbor. Perfect love can be simply defined as this: I receive God's unconditional love and I chose to fully love Him back.

The minute I begin to act out of complete and perfect love, I become a threat to the enemy. By embracing perfect love and uprooting our fear we will begin to finally walk in freedom!

QUESTIONS

1. What negative thoughts are you entertaining that are making you fearful?

2. How would you treat a friend that lied to you as much as your fear does?

PRAYER

Lord I thank you that you have given me an option. You have given me a better choice than the choice to fear. Thank you for the grace you have shown me! Thank you for the cross of Christ.

I pray that you would help me to seek out new ways to love others. I pray that my knowledge and love for you would outgrow my emotional responses to fear. Guard and guide me Lord as I make decisions each day and give me the courage to take my fearful thoughts captive.

AMEN

DAY 3

“HELLO! MY NAME IS...”

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.”
Psalm 139:13 (NIV)*

Did you know that you are the daughter of a King? Well, I’m here to tell you that even from the womb, God has placed special meaning on your life. Wanna know how I know?

Psalm 139:13 King David writes to God, *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.”*

Genesis 1:27 tell us that, *“God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”*

It is a fact! You are royalty! Did you also know that satan’s goal is to keep you from knowing that fact? And if you happen to know this fact he will always try to keep you doubting the truth.

“After fasting forty days and forty nights, he (Jesus) was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

*“He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’*

Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."

We see Jesus in this story very hungry from fasting forty days in the wilderness and satan sees his opportunity.

I want us to take note of the temptation itself. Before tempting Jesus he begins the statement with, "*if you are the son of God*". He is trying to prey on him using his best tactics, fear and doubt. He dangles doubt out there hoping that Jesus will take hold. Of course Jesus doesn't and stays strong. In the very end of this story we read Jesus's words, "Away from me, satan!" At that command satan had to flee.

If Jesus would have agreed with the lie then he would have been agreeing with the liar. In his last temptation, satan offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would just bow down to worship him. Why did satan have control of all of the kingdoms of the world at that time, you ask? Well, because Adam and Eve handed the keys over to him in the garden of Eden. When they were deceived by the enemy they ultimately gave him power over themselves. Sin gives the enemy a foothold into our lives. But the good news is that when Jesus paid the price of our sin, on that cross, He allowed us freedom from the bondage of sin.

The next few days of this study we will dig in deep to many subjects that address some lies that we have believed. These lies have taken root and must come out in order to experience freedom from bondage. If satan even tried to tempt Jesus regarding his identity in God, how much more will he try and trap us!

Learn from Jesus and tell Satan to be gone! Because of what Jesus did on the cross and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have that authority.

QUESTIONS

1. What have I made my identity other than God at times?

2. What power have I given Satan without even realizing it? What sin needs to go?

PRAYER

Lord I thank you for the gift of adoption! You have given me life and have accepted me into your family! Thank you for loving me and giving me the ability to stand firm against fear in the knowledge that you are my Father. AMEN

DAY 4

“OFFENDED MUCH?”

“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”

Luke 17: 1-2 (KJV)

Lots of crying, toy begging, and the frantic unloading of a way too full cart was happening on that Monday afternoon in Walmart. I had all four of my children with me that day. Four different opinions, four hungry stomachs, and four wiggling bodies under the age of five. I'm not sure why my brain justified going to the grocery store on a Monday that close to nap time but it was happening and I was oh-so-close to ending this most unpleasant time in my life.

The lady bagging all of my groceries sweetly smiled at the kids in the midst of the chaos and began to speak to me about her own grandchildren. “They are a joy,” she said. I smiled, nodded, then wiped the sweat from my face.

As our time in that candy-filled death trap that is the checkout line at Walmart came to an end, I noticed that all of my produce was set to the side and un-bagged. As I went to pay, the lady kindly informed me that her scale wasn't working and that I would need to go and get into another line and buy my produce there.

Frustration was briefly present internally but I just smiled and then gathered my items to set off on another Walmart adventure. Right before I walked away I heard the sound of external frustration around me. The middle-aged woman who was standing behind me began to loudly express her opinions to this kind Walmart employee. I was very surprised. Surprised that a woman with only a few items on the belt and no children hanging from her limbs would make such a fuss. She was apparently so inconvenienced that she needed everyone in the 5 surrounding lanes to hear about it.

This all went down right around the same time that the Lord was teaching me something valuable. Isn't He just good like that? He was teaching me about being offended.

My blood began to boil as the woman ripped this employee apart with her words. I noticed myself lingering there in order to make eye contact with the woman that was getting pummeled and offer an encouraging smile.

It shook me up.

I was physically mad all the way home. I took the 15 minute ride home as an opportunity to chew out the air around me. It was deeper than a moment of righteous anger. There I was alone and seeking revenge on blank space in front of me.

Quickly her offense became my offense. Deep roots of bitterness and unforgiveness will always bubble up to the surface as an offended attitude.

Offense has incredibly damaging properties. It causes hurt people to hurt people.

God's word is very specific in its teaching about taking on offense. In Luke chapter 17, Jesus teaches his disciples that *"it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones"*. Basically it is better for you to die than to bring offense to a little child.

Do you know what letting offense take "seed" in your life looks like? Your children are taught from a perspective that has grown from that seed. You will produce bitter and unforgiving generations of children. You are better off dead is what Jesus teaches. Wow! That is such a bold statement and a sobering reminder.

So how do we get rid of this root of offense in our lives? I'm so glad that you asked because scripture follows up this teaching with the parable of the mustard seed.

"And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.(KJV)" Luke 17:6

It's good to note that the King James Version is the closest translation of scripture to the original language that the bible was written in. It is a bit harder to read in this day and age but to really understand what Jesus is saying in this parable it's important to do so. A very important part of this parable is the fact that Jesus used the sycamine tree to refer to.

Here are some facts about the sycamine tree:

1. The sycamine tree had a very large and deep root structure. When cut down at the ground level leaving the roots behind, the tree would grow back.
2. The fruit that it produced was a very bitter and tangy fig.
3. The sycamine tree's wood was the preferred wood for building caskets.
4. The sycamine tree was pollinated only by wasps that would puncture the heart of the fruit with their stinger.

When you look at the correlation, isn't this what bitterness and unforgiveness does to our souls? Does sweeping unforgiveness under the rug really make a difference? It looks gone from the surface but really it's roots keep growing. A person that is bitter is usually a very hard person to engage with. A moment of offense will bring back a life-

time of unforgiveness. A little offense can be as if someone stung you right in the heart. You become an open and walking wound that is vulnerable for more hurt time and time again. And then the cycle continues when the hurting people begin to hurt others. Before you know it you are older, tired, angry, bitter, and the words that come out of your mouth do not bring life. They bring death.

The Word of God is described in Ephesians chapter six as the Sword of the Spirit. Based off of the context in which this was written, the Roman soldier's sword was used for two reasons. It was used to fight the enemy and then used to dig out the arrow heads that got past their shields in battle. The sword was used to cut in order to heal. God's word will heal offense, bitterness, unforgiveness, and the list goes on and on and on.

And if we you read right there in scripture you find the answer. *We must say to the tree, be plucked up and get into the sea, and it shall obey you.* It takes acknowledgment and action on your part. When you make the choice to uproot the sycamine tree in your life, you are choosing to change generations to come.

QUESTIONS

1. Who do you need to forgive?

2. Who has your unforgiveness, bitterness, & offended attitude hurt?

Stop to pray and ask Jesus to show you where the root of that hurt was formed. Wait for His response. He will bring to your mind that moment if you do not know it already. Once the root is revealed, ask Him to remove it once and for all!

PRAYER

Lord I pray that you would remove the root of bitterness and unforgiveness from my heart. God I thank you for being faithful and doing what you said you would do for me!

I pray that I would be able to move forward from this moment on with a different attitude, mindset, and confidence. A confidence in knowing that it has been finished, a confidence in asking for forgiveness and a confidence as I forgive those that have hurt me.

I pray that as you remove these roots from my life that the pain I feel would subside. Help me Lord to walk in freedom. Your grace gives me life and life abundant.
AMEN

DAY 5

“THE TRAP OF COMPARISON”

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)*

I transferred to Belmont University in Nashville Tennessee my sophomore year of college to pursue a music career. I was surrounded by so much talent there. It was absolutely terrifying. When I would sit down in that big auditorium surrounded by some of the most amazing talent in my generation, it would completely overwhelm me.

How will I compare to them? How will I make it to the top when she is better looking, when he sings better, or when they have better stage presence than me? The pressure and tension almost resulted in cardiac arrest right then and there.

And so began the lie.

The lie that I wasn’t enough.

The lie that when compared we all knew who was going to be on the bottom. Me.

Class after class, my professors taught a mixture of music theory, history, and technique. All of that information would then pave the way to mapping out the road to tangible success. Talented professors trained the best of the best so that we would be fully loaded with perfectly packaged awesomeness and be ready to conquer the music business upon graduation.

I did however learn something at Belmont that not one professor taught me. I learned the trap of comparison.

I spent several years studying the material but also studying my peers. I would watch the girls who seemed to glide to the top. What was their secret? Their winged eyeliner and swoopy bangs must have been the golden ticket. And so I tried it. The more out of the box a young girl seemed to push herself the more she began to be noticed.

“Her voice is so unique!”

“It’s nothing like we have heard before!”

They would go on and on.

All the beach blonde bombshells that sounded like Carrie Underwood were a dime a dozen around there. Each one of them clinging to the hope of being unique enough to grab someone's attention one day.

My junior year at Belmont we had an assignment at the beginning of the semester. Our assignment was to describe ourselves to the class. I was stumped. I had no idea who I was let alone who I wanted to be. I had raw talent oozing out of me but yet I was so focused on making myself a compilation of all the best parts of others, I missed it. I got three years in and had no idea what to say.

It was that moment I knew I had to figure out who I was supposed to be. Who God had called me to be.

Years later God delivered me from the trap of comparison. Being delivered from this required my willingness to let God trash all my thought processes about myself and give me new ones. I was so crippled by this trap that I needed out because I knew if I didn't get a healthy view of it, my daughter would grow up and fall into the same trap. Now that doesn't mean I don't struggle with this from time to time. I have been delivered from a way of thinking. I've learned to say no, not accept the trap, and move forward in a healthy direction. And whenever it creeps in I have the power to recognize it and reverse it.

When become moms, this trap puts out the welcome mat and opens its arms big and wide inviting us in. We shift our focus from *I have to be the most unique, best, and beautiful thing every created* to now *my child has to be the most unique, best, and beautiful thing ever created*. The cycle becomes more dangerous as we add little people with hearts and minds that need to be molded with a healthy perspective on this.

It's time to uproot this trap that has taken hold in our lives. Comparison can and will steal our joy.

My husband and I use a french press for coffee at our home. Often times the strainer on the french press doesn't get all of the bits of coffee beans so we use a hand held mesh strainer to filter out the beans from the coffee as it is poured into our cup. Without my little strainer my coffee would not be as enjoyable.

Let's pretend for a moment that one day my strainer decided to be a coffee cup. It wasn't made to be a cup but it had seen the coffee cup in action and placed a greater importance on its purpose. That little strainer could do all kinds of mental hoping to turn into a coffee cup but at the end of the day, it's still a strainer. If a mesh strainer is always trying to serve as a cup it will never be happy. It won't find joy in its purpose. It wasn't made to be a cup! It was made to filter out the good and the bad that goes into the cup. Its purpose is vital to our coffee drinking enjoyment.

Our joy is found when take pleasure in who we were created to be. Uniquely and individually designed for a specific purpose. Let's expose the lie! Let's embrace every part of ourselves and raise up the next generation to think and act differently.

QUESTIONS

1. Who do you need to stop comparing yourself to? _____
2. Read Romans 12:2. Is it impossible to renew your mind when you are constantly being conformed by the world? _____

PRAYER

Lord I pray that you would release me from the trap of comparison. God I thank you for being faithful to untangle me from the web of lies that has been set to ensnare me.

I pray that your Holy Spirit would remind me of this trap the minute my destructive thought processes begin. Help me to look to you when my flesh is weak and my desires are overwhelming.

I pray that would begin to feel free as you untangle me. Free from judgement, free from destructive criticism, free from people pleasing, and free from my former way of thinking.

I thank you in advance for the amazing transformation you have begun in my heart and mind!

AMEN

DAY 6

“DISCONTENTMENT”

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

“Mommy... MMM-AAAHHHH-MMEEE... MOMMY!!!”

With each word the imaginary hole in the ground that I was trying to go and hide in grew bigger and bigger.

“Raise your hand if you are ready for a nap?”

No power of Jedi mind tricks could make the clock jump forward a few hours, could it? The clock ticked and my mind wandered. I wondered what that one friend of mine from college was doing. I wondered if she was still at that amazing job and had that killer figure? Off to social media I would go to check and see if her figure had grown. Mine certainly had. In fact my oldest had just asked me why my tummy bounces when she tries to get my attention. The struggle was real. The struggle spurred me onward into a deeper and darker hole.

Comparison breeds discontentment. Once it is born, alive, and active, it seems hard to get rid of.

I began to resent my present day and crave my past. I would toil over the mundane details of the baby’s routine and wish for the future. I tried so hard to put on a happy face but the minute I would open my mouth to a girlfriend, all of it would come exploding out. My true colors were not bright and pretty. They were dull and felt lifeless.

The bottom line was that I just really didn’t believe God. If I had believed who God said I was then I would not have compared myself to others the way that I had done. Unbelief is what put my heart and mind on the right path toward comparison, discontentment and eventually the slow destruction of my self-worth.

The very first book of the bible tells the story of how Eve was deceived by the serpent. She became discontent with what she had when tempted and made a choice that changed the course of history.

We see the same thing in the story of Sarah and Abraham. When the Angel of the Lord came to Abraham to tell the old man that he would finally have a son and that he would be the father of many nations, Sarah laughed. Later on in the story she got tired of waiting on God and took matters in to her own hands and caused quite a mess.

But Paul, the writer of many books in the new testament, wrote this in Philippians 4:11, “... *For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*”

What circumstances was Paul in when he wrote this letter to the Philippians? **Prison.** He was in chains because he would not stop boldly preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus.

I encourage you to write this down in your prayer journal if you have one and study it often.

Focus on God → Thankfulness → peace → joy → contentment = good fruit
Focus on yourself → Grumbling → dissatisfaction → comparison → discontentment = sin

Paul warns us in 2 Corinthians 11:3, “*But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (NKJV)*”

Jesus taught his disciples how to live free from this bondage. Every one of us, just like the disciples, have choices every day to make. Follow God or not. Every morning when we wake up scripture tells us that we have been given a new day to rejoice and be glad in it!

Jesus’ message was simple, love God and love people. How can you love on God when you are constantly grumbling? How can you love other people when you are sick with envy over their belongings? Thankfulness tunes our hearts to sing His praise. In Philippians 4:6-8 Paul writes, “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (ESV)*”

Thankfulness releases God given peace over our lives creating joy in all circumstances. Discontentment cannot be found in joy. A content and joyful soul with naturally produce fruit. Healthy and delicious fruit that is not bitter to the taste.

One summer while we lived in Tennessee, my husband built several large raised garden beds for me. The same summer that we planted the garden, I conveniently had a newborn as well. At first the garden was easy to maintain. The weeds were tiny and so pulling them was a short and simple task. But as the summer went on and as my baby grew more mobile and needy the garden took a back seat. The daily weeding turned into bi-weekly weeding and eventually it began to become choked out by the overgrown invaders.

It doesn't take much to keep a weed alive, does it? Once they are germinated, it's all downhill from there. We are sinful fleshly people by nature. Grumbling takes no work at all. Having a thankful heart on the other hand, despite your circumstances, is hard and necessary work.

Go on ahead and get on your work gloves! It's time to start weeding!

QUESTIONS

1. Has discontentment stolen joy from you at all in life? Circle one: YES / NO
2. What circumstance(s) are you having trouble being content with? _____

3. Read Philippians 4:8. What items, people, jobs, etc. do you need to be more thankful for? _____
4. What would be a good way to express that gratitude?

PRAYER

Lord I thank you for your goodness and mercy. I thank you for being faithful to extend grace to me even when I am ungrateful and dissatisfied.

I pray that you would release your peace into my life. Help my thought process stay healthy and focused on you. Let your peace rest upon my mind, guarding me from the schemes of the enemy.

I pray that you would pluck the weeds of discontentment from my life. That I would be free from this daily sin cycle that has begun choking me and the others around me. I thank you for all of the tender love and care that you have showered me with.

AMEN

DAY 7

“SET ASIDE”

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

1 Peter 2:9

I had a girlfriend over for dinner a few weeks ago so that we could play catch up on each others lives. When I asked her how a few of her relationships were going that I knew had been on shaky ground her answer struck a nerve with me. She said, *“I am just trying to remind myself that I am set apart not set aside.”*

There are so many parts of myself that needed this perspective years ago. I remember being terrified as I stood in a small classroom in front of 25 insanely talented individuals. I had somehow talked myself into singing the song “Listen” by Beyonce for the seminar that day. It was a powerhouse hit from the movie “Dream Girls”. I was so scared to sing it. I was told by my professor to put fear aside and go for it!

After the performance was done, it was time for the students to give constructive criticism. This was when the strong were sifted from the weak.

One of the students in my class was a very talented young lady who was blind. She could make honest statements about a person’s performance solely based on what she heard. Her comments were usually spot on. If someone was nervous she could hear it. If someone was confident, you better believe she was picking up on that as well. Their attitude and mental perspective about the song and themselves dictated what came out of their mouth.

When it came time for me to hear from her about my shaky performance of “Listen” she paused and then said, *“You know, it sort of sounded like a Disney princess was singing it...”*

My fragile spirit was instantly crushed right there before my class. I quickly sat down and resigned myself to never singing songs like that ever again. And right there the lie was whispered into my ear. I took it and held onto it like a fragile baby for years. It was the lie that I just wasn't good enough.

Years later I was struggling again heavily with rejection. I felt set aside in every part of my life. I heard God whisper to me, I did not create you this way! If God did not

make me this way then how did I become this way? Someone had shared with me that I could ask God to show me the root. The root of where the pain had begun or where the lie was sown in.

So I asked Him and he quickly answered. In my mind I saw this memory. I saw myself and I saw my peer critiquing me. God began to break down where I had gone wrong in the situation. *“But Lord, it was her fault! She’s the one who said it!”* I sounded like a wounded toddler holding on to my pain like a broken toy that I wouldn’t hand over to him so that he could fix it.

You see the problem wasn’t in what she said, it was in how I heard it and then handled my emotions there after.

This life and the people in it are at times going to hurl insults and harmful statements our way. It is a guarantee that rejection will come in some form or fashion to you in your lifetime. But if I accept rejection in and allow it to manipulate my responses to others, I am hurting myself. It causes us to cower back, hiding ourselves away.

The root of rejection can and will run deep if you let it. It will take control of every thought telling it to follow the negative pathways in your brain already formed. We must tell our minds to stop and take hold of our thoughts (Romans 12:2). Yanking them out takes courage and faith in God.

Perspective really is everything. I learned that if I take a step back, take my thought captive and change my perspective, my heart does not accept rejection as truth. The song below is the cry of my heart and I have it on repeat daily. I encourage you to listen to the entire song. If I surround myself with how big God is and how important I am to Him, I can’t help but throw rejection to the side.

You Don’t Miss A Thing

Amanda Cook - Bethel Music ©

*When you sigh
The wind becomes a sonnet
When you laugh
The storm around me ceases
You whisper
And all my enemies are scattered
You surround me
With angels on assignment*

*What a wondrous thing
I can stand to sing
Cause when I fall to my knees
You’re the one who pulls me up again*

*What a mystery
That you notice me
And in a crowd of ten thousand
You don't miss a thing
Cause you see everything*

1 John 4:4-5 states, "But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them."

You belong to God therefore you have already received the victory in this situation. Let's act *from* victory and rip out the deep root of rejection from our minds and hearts. To God be the glory for great things He has done!

QUESTIONS

1. What moment of rejection from your past is negatively effecting your future?

2. Ask Jesus to show you the root. What did He show you?

2. Read 1 Peter 2:9. How do you view rejection now that you have read that you are a child of the King? _____

PRAYER

Lord I thank you for adopting me. I thank you for being a good father that never forgets about his children.

I pray that you would expose the lies that I have believed. Turn my feelings and emotions from rejection to acceptance. And Lord help me to remember your truth when someone says or does something to hurt me.

I pray that you would free me from my pre-existing wounds. Help me to forgive those that have rejected me and forgive me for rejecting others.

AMEN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Terra Wagner is a wife, and a mom to four little children first and foremost. But place her in front of a group of women, with a bible in her hand, and you will see why God has captured her heart and soul.

A graduate from Belmont University, Terra holds a commercial music degree with an emphasis in music business. Terra has served alongside many churches, choirs, and prison ministries during her time in Nashville Tennessee and now currently in the North Dallas area. She considers it an amazing privilege to serve with God's family ministering to many different denominations and cultures.

Whether it is leading a crowd in worship, teaching from a stage, chasing a child around with her camera, or praying with a girlfriend that is in desperate need of a miracle, God is at the center of all of it. Her heart has been forever changed by the love of Jesus Christ and her heart's desire is that women across the world would be changed by His love as well.

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