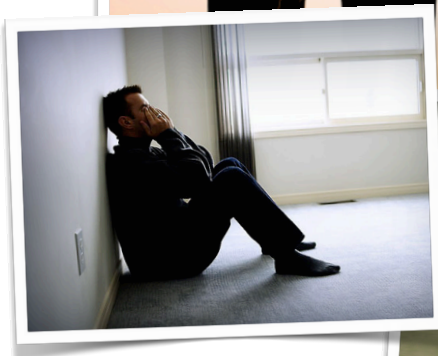


TRAUMA and the FAMILY



Den Haag
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Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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¹ Meaning: The ANOINTED one

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	5
Dealing with the Victim Spirit	6
CHAPTER 2	11
Prison created by not taking Responsibility for your Emotions / Feelings	12
CHAPTER 3	18
Prison of Self Abasement / Neglect / Abandonment	19
CHAPTER 4	24
Prison of Shame	25
CHAPTER 5	33
Prison of Resentment	34
CHAPTER 6	40
Prison of Fear	41
<i>Why Fear is to be challenged and overcome</i>	42
CHAPTER 7	49
Prison of Judgement	50
<i>Biblical Principle</i>	51
CHAPTER 8	56
Prison of Hopelessness	57
<i>How do we overcome</i>	61
CHAPTER 9	64
PRISON OF Unforgiveness	65
<i>What are the consequences of not Forgiving?</i>	66
<i>Our Calling</i>	71

Trauma and the Family

1. Victimhood – **Unlocking our mental prisons**
2. No Prozac in childhood pain – **avoidance**
3. All other relationships will end – **self neglect**
4. What didn't happen – **Unresolved guilt and shame**
5. Would you like to be married to you? – **Resentment**
6. Are you evolving or revolving? – **Paralysing fear**
7. The Nazi in you – **Judgment**
8. If I survive today, tomorrow I will be free – **Hopeless**
9. There's no forgiveness without rage – **Not forgiving**

The foundation of freedom is the power to CHOOSE!

Our worst experiences can be our best teachers.

Freedom is a lifetime practice – a choice we get to make again and again each day.

Hope allows us to live in the present instead of the past, and to unlock the doors of our mental prisons.

CHAPTER 1

Dealing with the Victim Spirit

Without doubt, one of the most oppressive of attitudes is that of having been wounded, abused, and maimed, especially when it occurs at a young age and on a continuous basis.

It is then quite easy to fall into thinking that - I will always be the worse off in any given situation - in other words a victim mentality.

Good definition

*If you have a victim mentality, you will see your entire life through a perspective that things constantly happen 'to' you. Victimisation is thus a combination of seeing most things in life as negative, beyond your control, and as something you should be given sympathy for experiencing as you 'deserve' better. **At its heart, a victim mentality is actually a way to avoid taking any responsibility for yourself or your life.***

By believing you have no power then you don't have to take action.

How to identify a victim mentality

- ◆ Self-centeredness
- ◆ Complaining about that which happens to them
- ◆ Holding on to every injustice notwithstanding the act of forgiveness
- ◆ Rarely seeing anything positive in life

The Biblical truth is that as the Passover story sets out being delivered from bondage and set free. Critically, a foundational stone of freedom is the power to **exercise your freedom of choice**.

The abuse can cause a sense of hopelessness ... can cause all manner of fear and worry, but becoming a child of the Covenant gives you the scope to choose HOPE.

John 15:26 *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

You overcome when:

- ◆ You learn to see the **opportunity** and not the problem
- ◆ You replace negative thoughts with ideas and plans that enable **growth**
- ◆ You decide that as a child of God that you have both **potential** and **purpose**
- ◆ You decide to choose God's response to every trial and tribulation that comes our way

Y'shua tells us that we are valuable to the Father, but He tells us that we will face tribulations

John 16:32-33 "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me. I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.**"

Freedom is a lifetime work - an understanding that with every trial there is pain /suffering BUT it's what happens next that is critical - **it is when we overcome that we are blessed, and only people who are blessed, can be a blessing to others.**

Revelation 2:7 "To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the paradise of God.'

Revelation 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a **new** name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'



Each trial gives you the opportunity to:

- find your inner strength
- to select your response, and move from what held you back (slavery) - the physical or mental prison of trauma

... to a position of freedom of choice to be released from the Pharaoh, the Nazi and the abuser / rapist.

Unfortunately, many of us are like that first generation of Israelites whom were set free from:

- working at building cities for Pharaoh in that merciless hot sun
- having the whip crack across your back for no reason
- having your firstborn thrown into the River Nile

..... and leaving Egypt, walking out into a time where:

- ◆ God provides water and food
- ◆ God provides **direction** (cloud and fire)
- ◆ God provides **protection** (an escape through the Reed Sea)
- ◆ God gives them a **reward** for their labour (gold and silver)

BUT

Their minds are still in prison ...

- ◆ We need time to change (it cannot be forced or rushed), but critically, we have to **decide** to change.
- ◆ Change is **interrupting the patterns of slavery** - renewing our minds and making the choice to live to Your full potential.

Sadly, these Israelites fail to do this:

- instead, they will complain that the water is bitter
- instead, they will have plenty of manna and not have to work to get it and yet they are not satisfied
- they will want sweet melons / onions and leeks - in their minds they are stuck in the past - they are not appreciating that which they have been given.

... and this pattern will go on.

They will arrive at the boundary of the Promised Land (in our case, a new beginning of a life of potential) AND be shown the bounty.

Fruit that you will struggle to carry - and abundance of blessing - in the physical experiencing FREEDOM however, the victim spirit remains, and they will be comfortable in their fear of the unknown - scared of a few giants (who will be defeated later on by a man called Caleb and his daughter) and **choose to remain bound in their prison of doing nothing.**

Sad to say but these people all will die in the wilderness, free in the physical BUT bound in their desire to remain victims.

If we remain the victim, then we want to go back to that what we know, even if it's bad for us - we will want to stay in that place where we are not required to make up our minds and can blame-shift everything that happens onto our abuse / wounded past.

Let us summarize

- ◆ Everyone will experience suffering ... it is universal.
- ◆ However, to be and remain a victim is optional ... its your choice.

A victim is stuck in past;

- has a balance sheet of losses and deficits
- can enumerate the levels of pain
- will want to stay there because then they have the right to do nothing
- will relive the loneliness of their experience and expect everyone to feel sorry for them

The path “out” of being the victim

Change the question from “**WHY ME**” → **TO WHAT NOW?**

(a) What was / did happen was then ... I am living in the now.

(b) Each and every tribulation is an opportunity to transform towards the **RENEWED MAN**.

Colossians 3:10 “ ... and have put on the **new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the Image of its Creator.”

Ephesians 4:24 “... and to put on the **new self**, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

(c) Grab hold of your freedom - look for the talents / gifts and abilities that God has given to you, and live to your full potential.

Matthew 25:15-17 “To one he gave five **talents**, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five **talents** went at once and traded with them, and he made five **talents** more. So also he who had the two **talents** made two **talents** more. And he who had received the five **talents** came forward, bringing five **talents** more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five **talents**; here, I have made five **talents** more.’ And he also who had the two **talents** came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two **talents**; here, I have made two **talents** more.’ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten **talents**.”

(d) Make a choice to be a role model to others and leave a legacy of **HOPE**

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE of dealing with a victim mentality

We have at least one wonderful example of a Biblical man who suffers much injustice - and could very easily have become a victim.

- ◆ He will be placed in a pit and sold as a slave
- ◆ He will work in a home and be accused of sexual misconduct and end up in jail
- ◆ He will help others get out of jail, only for them to forget their promise to help him as well
- ◆ He will be separated from his family for 17 years

However, he will make a choice to use to opportunity given to him to become the second in command in Pharaoh's kingdom.

Eventually, he will help those who first put him into a place of bondage - by providing food and accommodation in a time of great need.

His name is **Joseph**.



God's promise

Psalm 10:14-15 "You have seen; for You look at mischief and grief, so that You can take the matter in hand. The helpless commits himself to You; You help the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked! As for the evil man, search out his wickedness until there is none left."

AMEN

CHAPTER 2

Prison created by not taking Responsibility for your Emotions / Feelings

We all go through a childhood where we are faced with the real fact that we lack in certain areas;

- some will be prettier
- some will be clever
- some will be able to hit the ball or run faster
- some will be shy and some will stutter
- we will suffer some form of complex or other

Over and above this, some of us will be broken down in our core - being compared to a sister or brother that is always better than you are.

And then on top of that, some will face the anger / hatred and bitterness that parents dish out when they themselves are feeling inadequate and a failure.

On top of that some may even be exposed to abuse / rape and other traumatic abuse which will also impact of how you feel about yourself.

The role model that we are shown becomes the legacy-journey that you can decide to walk.

Principle 1

Actions that impact vs feelings or emotions that follow.

We should understand and be able to separate the actions that people take to belittle / hurt us from the feelings that follow.

There are no right or wrong feelings / emotions. They are only a reflection of / or a reaction to something that has happened to us.

What happens when we do not express our emotions, they stay bottled up inside and will continue to build until you reach a boiling point

What happens when we express those same emotions / feelings without any covering by the Holy Spirit, we are likely to show a degree of anger / hatred / disgust that is disproportionate to the action, as we will do so having built upon the foundation of previous wounds..

Principle 2

Feelings / emotions come from within us and NOT from the outside.

Whatever pain that we went through like abuse, beatings or rape, have left a mark on our minds.

We can never remove that memory. We may forgive, but we can never forget.

(An African saying “*an elephant never forgets, but a buffalo never forgives*”.)

While that may be true - we must understand that unless we “feel / have emotions” about whatever it is that happened to us, we will NEVER heal.

Those emotions are the barometer which informs us that we have some issue that requires attention. If you continue to avoid facing that reality ... you will never overcome that wounding from your past, and in fact, you will remain stuck at the time.

This is why we can see that some people have arrested development ... they may be 36 years old in age but they act as if they are 12.

Principle 3

Feelings / emotions do not define who you are

It may be very uncomfortable to show your emotions - to tell someone how you feel about them / or what they have done - as it may hurt them or cause them to react in an unacceptable way.

However, once you have done so, you set a pattern of how you want people to treat you.

Behaviours that we practice hiding our emotions / feelings.

- (a) **Blame game:** we work hard to change the way we feel about how people treat us - we search for and make excuses for poor behaviour ... in the process we spend a lot of energy trying to convince ourselves that the other person has a right to act like they did.
- (b) **Passivity:** we find that we are often sad / unhappy. We then live in a prison of making sure that we keep others happy so that they won't react towards us anymore. This is not something that is unique to the masses ... there are many leaders who are people-pleasers—and will not speak out against unbiblical behaviour, nor will they take a stand against all forms of injustice.
- (c) **Dependence:** we want others to like us. We restrict ourselves to meeting the needs of those who are controlling us with their bad habits and angers ... we give and give and give, only to find out that it's never enough.

In reality, we live in fear ... denying ourselves the right to be ourself. What you will find is that this person will easily lie about the circumstances;

- will exaggerate the feelings that they have for those who are abusing them
- will refuse to face the truth and will always be seeking to find excuses for unacceptable behaviour
- will be so well versed at living with a mask that few will realise the complexity or the seriousness of the situation

(d) **Myth words:** the world system has created words and put meaning to these words to engender emotions / feelings such as:

- disrespect
- triggered
- humiliated
- patronize

These may describe a behaviour, but have no connection to the emotion / feeling ... that is something which you generate internally, if you so desire.

GET RID OF THOSE WORDS

Biblical examples of people who are poorly treated yet do not let their feelings / emotions hamper their walk with God

Paul is rejected by his own leadership group, is forced to defend his own belief system to the others disciples, is judged by the Romans and imprisoned / beaten and so on, yet declares that it's all worth while for the Kingdom of God.

On top of that, he will choose to put aside the fear of man and stand making his point known when:

- he sees hypocrisy by Peter
- he sees people setting up ungodly standards to become children of the Covenant
- he has a difference of opinion with Barnabas



(e) Jesus / Y'shua says "*don't be afraid*" ... of anything, leave all fear behind and trust God to provide.

Psalms 27:1 "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be **afraid**?"

John 6:20 "But He said to them, "It is I; do not be **afraid**."

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be **afraid**."

(f) **Abigail** - We read the story where David comes to claim his just reward from Nabal. He gets treated badly and wants to take vengeance. Abigail decides not to let her feelings of fear and so on, take hold, but gathers herself and goes to make peace with David. It takes courage not to be afraid.

1 Samuel 25:14-17 *“But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, “Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him.”*”

1 Samuel 25:18-22 *“Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. And she said to her young men, “Go on before me; behold, I come after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. Now David had said, “Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.”*”

1 Samuel 25:23-28 *“When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live.”*”

Biblical examples of men who let their feelings / emotions rule their lives

Esau

He wants soup because he is hungry ... yet hates Jacob when he loses his birth right;

- He will marry a pagan woman in anger to spite his mother and father
- He will leave the Land of Promise and the legacy of the Covenant of Abraham behind

... because he could not deal with his feelings / emotions

Peter

He is brave when accompanied by Jesus ... but allows his fear to rule his feelings and emotions

- when the servant girl identifies him as a disciple ... he goes on to deny Him 3 times



Matthew 26:33-35 Peter answered Him, "Though they all fall away because of You, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I must die with You, I will not deny You!" And all the disciples said the same.

How do we deal with cropped up feelings and emotions?

i) Disengage from toxic people

There are two groups of people

- a) The givers and the takers.
- b) The servants and the Jezebel

Take time to identify such people ...

- know that they do not have the sensitivity needed to care about others
- know too that they will only think of themselves
- and in the process, will walk over you in order to get what they want.

Proverbs 4:14-17 "Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence."

Proverbs 16:18 *“A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.”*

Proverbs 14:7 *“Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.”*

ii) Love yourself / your life

God has declared that all people are equal BEFORE Him. That means that notwithstanding the abilities of others and their so-called successes, that we are all equal in the Body of Messiah with a unique job to do. The successes on earth are earth-bound and may or may not have any value in the living Stone Tabernacle in Heaven. What matters most are the gifts of JOY / PATIENCE, LONG SUFFERING AND THANKFULNESS that we can reflect when we have healed emotions.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34 *“Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.”*

iii) Decide to learn from every situation

We are told that we will have trials and tribulations ... why don't we use every opportunity to try to see where GOD will take us, if we can follow some rather difficult steps:

- ◆ Refrain from blaming others
- ◆ Confront unacceptable behaviour which has become a pattern in our life
- ◆ Step back and think before you accept and react to the “feeling”
- ◆ Talk with a life partner to get a different viewpoint

Matthew 7:12 *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

Summary

A wonderful statement reads as follows *“the opposite of depression is expression”*.

You have been given emotions and feelings in order to reflect the GOODNESS and the FAITHFULNESS of GOD ... DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT GOD'S LOVE.

Matthew 5:16 *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

AMEN

CHAPTER 3

Prison of Self Abasement / Neglect / Abandonment

How do we get to a place of such low esteem?

Low self-esteem arises when we are exposed to:

- ◆ **Physical abandonment:** adopted, or have been rejected by parents
- ◆ **Emotional abandonment:** are living with parents but are unloved and unaccepted

We are created in the Image of God.

Genesis 1:26 *“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.”*

We are blessed with talents and gifts to progress on this journey on earth with the sole purpose of reflecting God’s Glory AND we have a mandate to live a life of authority.

Genesis 1:26 (b) *“And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

That very purpose should indicate the huge deviation which we have taken from our calling and should be the “red light” on the dashboard of our life to indicate that it’s time to stop and realign ourselves with God.

It is critical to establish and understand the process and the progress that we make from this Image of God until we reach the stage where we live with such a negative image of ourselves.

To establish a positive image of ourselves we need (the Biblical example that I use today is that of Ishmael):

(a) A father to role model the attributes of God ... justice, humility and compassion

Micah 6:8 *“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”*

Fathers in these days have a wrong idea of their purpose. **We are not here to provide bread and water alone.**

Genesis 21:14 *“So, Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.”*

Nor are they to define life in the family in terms of **mere obedience to authority**. An authoritarian father with no mercy and fairness **will create a spirit of rebellion**. Abraham fails to protect his son or to do justice when Sarah complains about him.

Genesis 16:9-11 The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” The angel of the LORD also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” And the angel of the LORD said to her, Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. **You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”**

(b) A mother to role model seeing / hearing God by faith. Hagar is chased away and will end up in the wilderness with her son, crying where she will abandon him under a bush. No matter how difficult the circumstances are, a child needs to know, without doubt that they will not be alone



Genesis 21:15-16 “When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, “Let me not look on the death of the child.” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.”

So what happens to cause us to go off the rails from this Image of God ?

i) A low self-image begins when I realize that one or both of my parents never wanted a relationship with me .

This can manifest in a number of ways:

- ◆ A parent can continually raise the bar of expectations. You are only acceptable when you perform, the highest grades at school / university, the place in the best sports team in the country ... in other words, it is not about “**who you are**” but “**what you do**” and “**how good you make me look**”.
- ◆ A parent places unacceptable pressures on a child. To react like an adult while they still small, to accept a level of responsibilities that do not match their age / capability and then get judged for failing to meet the standard required.
- ◆ A parent (leadership) can, by submitting to their own fears and uncertainties, cause undue pressure on a child ... **Ishmael** was a son in the family. He knew that Abraham was his father. For many years **Sarah** had acted as a second mother to him. Now when she has her own son, she mistreats **Hagar** because of him, which causes them to be sent out to die in the wilderness.

Genesis 16:6 *But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.*

- ii) Once we feel **abandoned**, we will expect others to reject us and display the same disregard for us.
- iii) Because we are abandoned, we will develop the feeling and idea that we are **unworthy** ... continually failing to meet the expectation of the parents builds on the mind model that we are **useless** and therefore have no right to exist. Having this mindset we will almost always take **flight** and run from any form of pressure.
- iv) And because we consider ourselves unworthy, we will show **contempt** for others. We develop a **selfish nature** ... always looking out for ourselves and degrading others. We go through life with no JOY irrespective of any blessings or attention that we may get given.
- v) We will always have GUILT about our past and will WORRY about the future, if we continue to operate and live with the expectation that you are unworthy.

How do we return from a low self-image back to that of made in the Image of God?

- a) **Know that God cares about you** and always desires to restore full relationship with you... know that God will always be looking out for you. We tend to think that this is only in respect of the need to become a child of the Covenant , but truth be told - God is looking for the “**real you**”.

Genesis 16:7-8 *“The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?”*

Psalms 27:10 *“For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in.”*

b) Deal with the hurts / unfair expectations

Know that if you continue to practice a sense of **unworthiness** that you will only become better at it and never heal. It takes a time of introspection and meditation on the path that you find yourself and an evaluation of the path that GOD has laid out for you, to determine whether you want to remain stuck in this rut or not. Make a plan to REJECT any labels painted on your life.

We have been set free. You have experienced a new type of the Exodus ... now you have to make a choice. *Do you want to walk in wholeness or are you going to maintain the mindset of the slave ... harking back to the sweet melons when you can eat from the manna of Gods Table?*

c) Take a hard look at your life

In real terms, you should live a life of balance ... equal time spent between work and love and leisure.

If you have an imbalance, then more than likely you are trying to compensate for your low self-image. Understand that you need to release your anxiety and fears and step out in faith.

Isaiah 35:4 “Say to those **who have an anxious heart**, “**Be strong; fear not!** Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

d) Make a new Covenant with God



Once we understand that our low self-esteem / sense of unworthiness is not God’s plan for us, then we can determine to adapt towards the original specification that God determined.

As a first step that means that we should **circumcise** ourselves ... in the case of Ismael this meant in the physical.

Genesis 17:25-26 “And Ishmael his son was **thirteen years old when he was circumcised** in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised.

However, today this requirement is changed so that we circumcise the mind /emotions / and the heart

Ezekiel 11:19 “And I will give them one **heart**, and a new spirit I will put within them. You will remove the **heart** of stone from their flesh and give them a **heart** of flesh,

e) Discover your talents / gifts and calling

We are all blessed with a unique set of gifts. These are given by God and are irrevocable. These gifts are designed to be functioning within the Body of Messiah.

If you still consider yourself unworthy, then you will not release those gifts and the Body of Messiah will SUFFER the consequences.

Your actions of NOT reflecting God's attributes will impact others who are in desperate need of a touch from God.

Remember, you will meet and interact with a group of people that other members of the BODY may never see.

Ephesians 4:4-8 *“There is **one body and one Spirit** - just as you **were called** to the one hope that belongs to your call - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But **grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift**. Therefore it says, “When He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.”*

Ephesians 4:9-16 *(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that He had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) **And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”***

f) Build your faith

Keep a record of the milestones in your life. The wonderful and good memories that you make:

- of exciting happenings
- of good friends who really care
- and build a picture of the faithfulness of God.

Luke 7:9 *“When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed Him, said, “**I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.**”*

Luke 7:50 *“And He said to the woman, “**Your faith has saved you; go in peace**”*

Set your heart to receive from God

Job 34:14 *“If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath,”*

AMEN

CHAPTER 4

Prison of Shame

Shame is one of the most powerful emotions. **It creeps up and overtakes you just like a virus from the inside.**

It's described by Dr Borysenko like this:

“If you eat a poisonous plant just once, you will never want to go back there again because of the physiological terror / horror and sickness is imprint on your mind ... because that's how we survive, by not eating those plants.”

On the other hand, as described by Dr van der Kolk:

“People who are shameless have no empathy and have no concern for other people ... people without shame are dangerous.”

It is therefore clear that shame has two sides to the coin. What we need to deal with is the element of shame that causes believers to stop functioning properly.

Shame will reverberate in your mind with these words:

- it's my fault
- I don't deserve it
- it could have been worse

Let's study some examples of Biblical characters who suffered from shame

I will highlight that many people have made mistakes and felt the discomfort and the feelings of shame. What I will highlight is that God reaches out in every situation to reinstate those who have repented - HE then restores their calling.

Failure to accept this path of restoration is REJECTING not only the kindness that God wishes to show you, BUT also means that you remain useless in the Body of Messiah

i) The woman with five failed marriages

Her level of shame is so great that she will walk to the well to collect water in the heat of the day ... in the midday sun.

- she will walk alone
- she will avoid the whispers and the gossip where people will speak about her and point fingers at her and warn their friends about her
- she will experience the condemnation of the community



But, Jesus reaches out to her and shows her that there is no condemnation for those who believe and want to change.

John 4:21-26 “Jesus said to her, “***Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth.***” The woman said to Him, “***I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.***” Jesus said to her, “***I who speak to you am He.***”

ii) **David**

He is king over all of Israel ... it is that time of year when kings go out to war. Unfortunately, he has decided that it's too much effort for him and he stays behind in his house. He will look out his window, see a naked woman and desire her.

- ◆ He will sleep with her, have her fall pregnant and then use his position and power to have her husband killed.
- ◆ He will experience intense shame when the man of God ... the prophet, comes to challenge him. This shame will increase in intensity when the son that is born dies.

2 Samuel 11:26-27 *“When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.”*

2 Samuel 12:7-19 *“Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. **Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in hHis sight?** You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. **Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me** and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’” David said to Nathan, **“I have sinned against the LORD.”** And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, **the child who is born to you shall die.**” Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and he became sick. David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor **did he eat food with them.** On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, “Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm.” But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead.”*

God sees that David has truly repented, he is a changed man, and blesses him with a son, Solomon who will build the temple in Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 12:24 *“Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.”*

iii) The woman with the discharge of blood

This woman experiences constant rejection and condemnation. She is “unclean” for 12 years ... so for all of this time she has not had the opportunity to enter into the temple for prayers or any community activities. She will have seen the looks of disgust and heard the comments and the judgements that people would have made ... wondering what she had done to deserve this and why God would not heal her.

Luke 8:43 *“And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.”*

But she had faith in God's faithfulness and trusted that she would be healed. Take careful note ... not only is she healed BUT Jesus makes sure that she and everyone else would know that her shame had been removed ... He says "go in peace".



Luke 43:44-48 "She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. And Jesus said, "**Who was it that touched me?**" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" But Jesus said, "**Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.**" And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, "**Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.**"

In her action of faith and the healing work of Y'shua / Jesus the prophecy of Isaiah 54:4 is revealed.

Isaiah 54:4-8 "Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His Name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called. For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer."

iv) Adam and Eve

The most basic of stories ... the very first example of shame.

Adam and Eve are granted the position as ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. They are placed in the perfect location of the Garden of Eden with absolute abundance in every aspect of their needs. They have complete intimacy with God and know that they are loved / respected / welcomed and fulfilling their calling ... and

- then they listen to the snake
- experience the highest degree of a sense of failure and shame ... they cover their nakedness (shame) with fig leaves

... little do they realize that an external covering cannot cover an internal feeling!

Genesis 3:7 *“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”*

Genesis 3:8-11 *“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the Garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”*

God comes to show that our shame can only be covered by a blood sacrifice (initially an animal, but later on by His Son, Y’shua / Jesus)

Genesis 3:20-21 *“The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.”*

The difference between Regret and Repentance

Regret is the sorrow about something that you did. God regrets making mankind when the world falls into sin (**Genesis 6:7**). But, in this case He has done nothing wrong - so His actions are designed to create a new beginning.

Mankind however, sometimes unintentionally, but most often intentionally decides to do things that will cause immense hurt to others

- This will leave huge scars on the hearts and emotions of others
- This will result in consequences which very few people consider

One such act is that of committing **adultery** and thereby breaking all trust bonds that existed beforehand.

This type of action leads to self-destruction, as is the case with Esau.

However, I want to highlight this difference by using two other Biblical examples.

The first is that of Judas

He hatches a devious plot to sell out Y'shua / Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. The soldiers will capture Y'shua / Jesus, will hand Him over for trial, and shortly after that see that He is crucified. Judas has regrets ... he will go out into the field and hang himself.



Matthew 27:3-5 *"Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself."*

The second is that of Peter

He will deny Y'shua / Jesus 3 times simply because he fears the reaction of the people and the obvious conclusion that can be made that Y'shua / Jesus will soon be crucified.

Luke 22:56-62 *"Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with Him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he too is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how He had said to him, "**Before the rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.**" And he went out and wept bitterly."*

- ◆ He will experience the depth of shame and will leave Jerusalem and return to the fishing boat.
- ◆ His actions shows his measure of repentance, for as soon as Jesus appears on the beach and calls to him, he will respond to the calling to throw the net out on the other side of the boat and to catch the 153 large fish. After this meal Y'shua / Jesus fully restores Peter's calling.

John 21:15-19 *"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, **"Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?"** He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him a second time, **"Simon, son of John, do you love Me?"** He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, **"Tend My sheep."** He said to him the third time, **"Simon, son of John, do you love Me?"** Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, **"Feed My sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."** (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this He said to him, **"Follow Me."***

Fake Guilt and unnecessary Shame

The Bible makes it clear that there are two circumstances where we can experience false guilt and wrongful shame.

(a) The accuser of the brethren comes to speak all manner of things in the Heavenly Court Room.

We all must understand is that an act of repentance and a walk of holiness will deny satan any credibility with GOD.

Revelation 12:10-12 *"And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! **But woe to you, O earth and sea,** for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"*

(b) Our own conscience

We know what acceptable practice in the walk of faith on earth is. There are times when we are weak. We must resist the temptation to fall at these times. We must also recognize that there are brethren who are only starting off on this journey ...

- who have not yet been able to absorb all of the intent of the Commandments
- we should make sure that we do not present any temptation to them while they are immature,
- nor must we place a burden on them to conform to the traditions of men

1 Corinthians 8:7-13 “However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. **Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.**”

We have a Promise from GOD

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 “But He said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, **I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**”

Psalms 103:8-12 “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.”

Revelation 21:3-4 “He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

AMEN



CHAPTER 5

Prison of Resentment

We have to try to define the concept of resentment. Most dictionaries give a rather vague idea of what this may mean.

Therapists define the components of resentment as follows:

Persistent anger

This is more than passing anger ... this is a feeling that is hard to shake and will spill over into bitterness quite quickly.

Unfair treatment / injustice

This occurs when you know that someone:

- has caused an injustice ...
- has misrepresented something you did or said, or
- has deliberately presented a false image of you, often in gossip.



Dwelling on upsetting experiences

This occurs when hurtful / painful experiences are played over and over in your mind ... when the thinking process cannot be stopped, we will have a sense of resentment building up.

Causes of resentment

a) inequality in relationships

- When one partner has more power than the other ...
- when the weaker partner is abused with an unfair distribution of the work.
- When one partner has to offer up more (time / resource / love) than the other.

We can also define this as suffocation by the other partner if our ideas and views are ever considered important enough to be even listened to.

b) abuse and neglect

When a child is abused or neglected. This can be the case if the parents are so focused on their jobs / occupation / sport / ministry that they have no time for the child, then a degree of resentment will grow. Parents often try to compensate with **gifts** instead of love ... with the result that a **self destructive type of behaviour** is born in the child, which carries on later in life into all other relationships.

c) humiliation / prejudice

Any form of prejudice ie. my skin colour, my accent, my looks, especially if I am not very pretty / handsome - and any discrimination - will be a humiliating experience, and will cause resentment. Common among many family and friends is the act of giving people some really horrible nicknames.

d) envy / jealousy

It's quite common for people to look at the position and the possessions that other people have gathered together, and then to be envious of that wealth. Also common is the jealousy that arises when we see one individual rise up to great heights in something like the world of sport, even more so if that individual was not particularly good at that sport in their younger days, and you could beat them in all matches. This resentment arises out of the fact that the rewards seems to be extravagant whilst we continue to struggle.



e) rejection

More so than for others, people with inferior complexes and people who are naturally shy / withdrawn can very easily feel rejection when starting off relationships with the opposite sex /or being refused a job interview.

This hurt - if repeated a few times - will build into complex feelings of resentment that has multiple layers.

Effects of Resentment

- (a) While emotions are neither right nor wrong, a build-up of resentment causes great pain and will eventually convert into health issues ... mental and physical.
- (b) In addition you are more that likely to respond to people in one or two ways:
- i) either get angry with repeated rejection ... i.e. you lash back at / or retaliate with your own actions
 - ii) AND you have a need to prove that you are also right

A BIBLICAL TIP: When people tell you that you are always wrong ...

- agree with them
- say that they are correct

... it may sound strange, but **telling them that they are wrong is the same as accepting the blame** - and if we do this then we are accepting a **monkey** that is not ours to shoulder or you avoid conflict at all in difficult situations.



- (c) You will find yourself in a pattern of negative behaviour
- i) levels of frustration rising
 - ii) a fight / disagreement / harsh words
 - iii) a process of peace-making

Resentment converts into Bitterness

Some signs of bitterness which you can possibly identify ...

(a) Hopelessness

We are instructed to wrestle with God and never give up. The story of Jacob and the angel is a prime example.

Philippians 4:4-7 *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 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.”*

(b) Discord

Bitterness will spread and very soon influence most people around us. The fruit that we produce will not reflect the Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 12:12-15 *“Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;”*

(c) Gossip

Those who speak about others / who spread misinformation and information that has been modified to suit a particular situation will find that the root of their evil way is bitterness.

2 Corinthians 12:20 *“For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish - that perhaps there may be **quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.**”*

(d) Double standards

God has set a standard by which we should live. When we speak one thing yet do / live another value then we are living to a double standard and will create uncertainty with those who know us and bitterness with those who trusted us.

Matthew 23:2-12 *“Then Jesus said to the crowds and to His disciples, **“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others.**”*

For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at Feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have One Teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have One Father, who is in Heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have One Instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

(e) Ungratefulness



We have much to be grateful for ... notwithstanding any trial / tribulation. The fact remains that we are children of the Covenant ... we are therefore required to take every thought captive that could cause us to react unacceptably towards others.

2 Corinthians 10:5-6 *“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”*

Deal with Resentment

If we allow these feeling / attitudes / emotions / ideas to fester then they will destroy and can eventually kill us.

Galatians 5:19-21 *“Now the works of the flesh are evident: **sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.** I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”*

Scripture gives us the answer ... the how change!!!

(a) Make every effort to live in peace

Hebrews 12:14-15 *“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;”*

(b) Get rid of all bitterness-anger-malice, etc, - and be compassionate & kind

Ephesians 4:31-32 *“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

(c) Make a choice not to retaliate

1 Peter 2:23-25 *“When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His Body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

Luke 23:34 *“And Jesus said, “Father, **forgive them**, for they know not what they do.”*

(d) Make a choice to forgive

Matthew 6:14-15 *“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

(e) Bless all others

Romans 12:14-21 *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, **“if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”***

AMEN

CHAPTER 6

Prison of Fear

We have two different understandings of fear:

- (a) **Fear / Awe of God** (we would always encourage this fear as it portrays an understanding that God is supreme and we are servants - Proverbs 1:7)
- (b) **Fear of things / events on earth** (we should do everything in our power to overcome this fear as it will prevent us from living to the full capacity of the calling which GOD has placed in our hearts)

KJV Dictionary definition ... FEAR, n. See the Verb.

1. ***A painful emotion or passion excited by an expectation of evil, or the apprehension of impending danger.*** Fear expresses less apprehension than dread, and dread less than terror and fright. The force of this passion, beginning with the most moderate degree, may be thus expressed, fear, dread, terror, fright. Fear is accompanied with a desire to avoid or ward off the expected evil. Fear is an uneasiness of mind, upon the thought of future evil likely to befall us.

Fear is the passion of our nature which excites us to provide for our security, on the approach of evil.

2. ***Anxiety; solicitude.***

The principal fear was for the holy temple.

3. ***The cause of fear.***

Thy angel becomes a fear.

4. ***The object of fear.***

Except the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me (**Genesis 31**).

5. ***Something set or hung up to terrify wild animals, by its colour or noise (Isaiah 24; Jeremiah 48).***

6. In scripture, ***fear is used to express a filial or a slavish passion.*** In good men, the fear of God is a holy awe or reverence of God and his laws, which springs from a just view and real love of the divine character, leading the subjects of it to hate and shun every thing that can offend such a holy being, and inclining them to aim at perfect obedience. This is filial fear.

I will put my fear in their hearts (**Jeremiah 32**).

Slavish fear is the effect or consequence of guilt; it is the painful apprehension of merited punishment (**Romans 8**).

The love of God casteth out fear (**1 John 4**).

7. ***The worship of God.***

I will teach you the fear of the Lord (**Psalms 34**).

8. *The law and word of God.*

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever (**Psalm 19**).

9. *Reverence; respect; due regard.*

Render to all their dues; fear to whom fear (**Romans 13**).

Fears favourite words that you will use;

- I told you so
- I told you that you would regret it
- I told you that it was too risky
- I told you that it would not turn out well

... and most of all I would hate to be disappointed that my hunches had not been found to be true.

Why Fear is to be challenged and overcome



2 Timothy 11:7 *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (NKJV).”*

There are many things in this life that will tempt us to fear.

(a) Our hearts can be filled with faith and love and hope

(b) If fear enters into our hearts then faith and love and hope depart --in other words these concepts cannot co-exist with fear

Man's fear of things reveals that GOD is not in control of his life

Fear will be based on a perversion of the truth

- a false idea
- a false expectation
- a misinterpretation of the word

Let's look at a few worldly things / feelings / emotions that men fear;

Global pandemic

A real disease or one big fraud. The battle between the medical scientists and the between the legal profession is gaining momentum. Nevertheless, the WHO and our governments created enough fear to change our lives significantly.

- ◆ Sacred to go outside
- ◆ Forced to hide behind a mask
- ◆ Forced to forgo Biblical community living and financially ruined ... without doubt most probably the cause of the most fear over the past few years

Isaiah 8:11-13 *"This is what the Lord says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people: "Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; **do not fear** what they fear, and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread"*

Disease such as cancer

As each day goes by and you get older you wonder how and when the frail human body will fail. And the news so often speaks of an ever increasing rate of serious ailments for which seemingly there is no cure.

Isaiah 41:10 *"**Do not fear**, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand"*

Sudden disaster

The typical end of the world scenarios !!!

Proverbs 3:25-26 *"**Have no fear** of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be at your side and will keep your foot from being snared"*

Religious persecution

We are called to be set apart. In a sense we understand that there will be a chasm between us and the world. However, the degree of hatred ... the level of anti-Semitic words and actions, are increasing by the day.

Isaiah 51:7 *“Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have taken My instruction to heart: **Do not fear** the reproach of mere mortals or be terrified by their insults”*

Loneliness

The ultimate fear of man:

- not to have someone to care for you or to be a friend
- the cold room at night or the sight of an old man sitting on a park bench

Joshua 1:9 *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”*

Being over whelmed and confused

The many false teachers and prophets that abound in the world today ... those who were previously known as “snake oil salesmen”.

Proverbs 3:5-6 *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight”*

Anxiety

There are many things happening at an international-governmental level that we cannot control — but which have consequences for our health ... our wellbeing and happiness.

Philippians 4:6-7 *“**Do not be anxious** about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”*

Psalms 46:1-3 *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. **Therefore we will not fear**, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling ... Be still, and know that I am God...”*

Economic hardship

- ◆ The **control of finances** by the few mega-rich,
- ◆ the **political interference** in business (especially small enterprises) and the level of corruption and fraud that goes on un-checked
- ◆ the perpetual **wars** that are created to satisfy the ego of men (millions dying / orphans left stranded and food shortages all over the world
- ◆ the level of **taxes** that are being raised but not spent on infrastructure just highlight why inflation goes up and income levels are restricted

Psalm 112:6-8 “Surely the righteous will never be shaken ...They will **have no fear** of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes”

1 Peter 3:14 “But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened”

Great men of GOD struggled with fear, but chose to Overcome

i) *Isaiah*



He faced God and realizes that his lips are unclean and that he cannot fulfil his destiny. His cry of deliverance is heard and he becomes a holy prophet.

Isaiah 6:5-7 “And I said: “**Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!**” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

ii) Moses

He gets to face God at the burning bush and will declare his fear ... namely, that he **stutters** and cannot speak freely.

Exodus 4:10-13 “But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, **I am not eloquent, either in the past or since You have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.**” Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”

iii) Gideon



He will hear that he is expected to go out and lead the nation to war ... he will hide in the wheat mill and even after God has spoken, needs to have the instruction confirmed over and over again.

Judges 6:14-15 “And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” And he said to Him, “**Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.**”

iv) Elijah



He will face 450 Baal priests, and the 400 prophets of Asherah ... he will trust God to bring down the fire on his sacrifice in order to prove that the pagan gods are worthless. He will then go to battle to kill all pagan priests. Yet, the moment Jezebel reacts, he will be filled with **fear** and run to hide in a cave.

It's only when God speaks to him, in that small still Voice, that he regains the courage to come out and face the world.

1 Kings 19:1-8 “Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” **Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life** and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again.

And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the Mount of God."

We must learn to cast out Fear

(a) Accept and trust that God is always with you

Deuteronomy 31:8 *"It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. **Do not fear** or be dismayed."*

(b) Determine to be obedient to His Commandments and His will as expressed by the Holy Spirit

Proverbs 14:26-27 *"In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. **The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.**"*

James 2:19-26 *"You believe that God is One; you do well. Even the demons believe - and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and **faith was completed by his works**; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" - and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also **faith apart from works is dead.**"*

(c) Learn to love

1 John 4:18-21 *"**There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.** We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And **this Commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.**"*

2 Peter 1:5-7 *"For this very reason, make every effort to **supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.**"*

AMEN

CHAPTER 7

Prison of Judgement

The very idea of judgement brings into play the idea of the concept of justice. It's quite easy to make the case that judgements are necessary in order to ensure justice for the injustices of the world. Or in the case where you are sensing some form of danger and are trying to warn people.

In fact, we are instructed to judge in only two circumstances (in what we can call evaluating judgements):

i) In the case of people who are false prophets.

Matthew 7:15-20 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”

ii) In the case where people are busy with false teaching /wrong interpretations of the word

Matthew 7:6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

Unfortunately, believers tend to take extreme measures when it comes to their interpretation of the WORD. They may apply Commandments (rules) OR apply man-made TRADITIONS as a Biblical obligation. Anyone failing to meet that standard then has many fingers pointed at them ... in a very judgmental way.

The underlying spirit behind this is a **strong desire to allow people to feel better about themselves or to feel superior to others.**

While I have set out these circumstances within which we can “judge”, we need to keep the fundamental principle in mind that:

- we should ONLY speak to or ..
- react to .. or
- judge other believers

Paul tells us clearly that we have NO RIGHT to judge unbelievers at all and that this remains the prerogative of God Himself.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 “For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? **God judges those outside.**”

Biblical Principle

We have a clear Commandment not to judge. The reason is simple. We are expected to reflect the absolute balance between love and justice which God always maintains. It is neither one nor the other, BUT both at the same time.

Matthew 7:1-4 *“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. **Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?** Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye?”*



We are called to love our neighbour as ourselves AND we are to walk in obedience to His Commandments and Will.

If we only focus on the justice part, then we fail to reflect the love / grace that God has for mankind (this is when you will hear *“the Bible says”*).

James 4:11-12 *“Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is only One Lawgiver and Judge, He who is able to save and to destroy. **But who are you to judge your neighbor?”***

Jesus reflects / responds to truth and grace

John 1:14 *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

If we only focus on the love / grace, then we allow all sorts of compromise / sin to become an acceptable norm.

The result is that we are either in a state of imbalance or insecure in ourselves

(a) The prison of judgement arises when either we have done something wrong, or else someone in the family has done something hideous.

Let us give a few examples:

- your family were involved in the Nazi death camps
- your family made profits out of the hardships of war / natural disasters
- your family members have committed mass murders / rapes
- you have done something equally horrible (adultery)

The consequence!!

Your name / family name are linked to that deed (keep in mind that you may have a surname and it may be the same as those mentioned above, however you are not a relative of them at all) and everywhere, where you go, people point fingers / or speak in whispers.

(b) The prison of judgement also arises when we don't live up to the expectation of others ... a parent /a teacher. If those judgmental words are repeated, they form a pattern which becomes a norm by which we live. For example, if your mother says you are clumsy and fall over your own feet, look out for that prophetic statement to become a reality in your life.

Thoughts such as:

- take that look off your face
- don't be a burden
- show no emotion,
- act as if you are fine,
- become the words that will play repeatedly in your life

As soon as you face a familiar / similar SITUATION, you will withdraw into the old pattern of coping.

(c) The prison of judgement also come into being when you are exposed to repeated trauma. This can take a form of beating / sexual abuse / verbal abuse etc. This regular / harsh unjust treatment will form a pattern of behaviour which will manifest itself in many years to come.

This type of trauma very easily results in arrested development ... where the person will grow chronologically older, but will act like a child, or can translate into Dissociative Identity Disorder.

We are victims

But the sad story is that we will victimize others (even those close to us, like our own children). We will merely repeat the pattern / role model which we experienced.

What we need to understand is that not only:

- are those who experience the judgement BUT,
- also, those who so easily judge
- are **both** caught up in the prison of judgement

Biblical examples that define ungodly judgements

(1) Superficial judgements

In this case we fail to analyse the facts, or we even fail to determine any facts, but jump to conclusions based on what we **expect** people say about us. In this process, (often under the guise of spiritual prayer / intercession) we will discuss people without their knowledge and place a burden on them which they should not carry.

John 7:24 *“If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because on the Sabbath? I made a man’s whole body well. **Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.**”*

Proverbs 18:13 *“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”*

Luke 7:36-40 *“One of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind Him at His Feet, weeping, she began to wet His Feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His Feet and anointed them with the ointment. **Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, He would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.”** And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.”*

Luke 7:41-50 *“A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” **Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for My Feet, but she has wet My Feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss My Feet. You did not anoint My Head with oil, but she has anointed My Feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven - for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”** And He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” Then those who were at table with Him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”*

(2) Hypocritical judgements

In this case we automatically assume the worse of others, most often forgetting our own part in the interaction. This case is even worse if we include other believers in the debate, thereby spreading the false image to more than the current circle.

Romans 2:1-5 *“Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man - you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself - that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not **knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.**”*

Luke 6:41-42 *“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? **You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.**”*

(3) Harsh / unforgiving judgements

It speaks for itself. Once healed / saved / set free is a blessing from God. Any judgement which places a label around someone else’s head, or which belittles them, will leave a scar from which many will struggle to recover. Remember,, this type of judgment implies that **trust** has been broken.

Titus 3:2-5 *“Remind them **to be submissive to rulers and authorities**, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness,”*

(4) Self-righteous judgements

James 4:6-8 *Therefore it says, **“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”***

(5) Untrue judgements

Proverbs 19:5 “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape.”

The Path to Restoration

(a) God sets out a safety mechanism.

In order to make sure that no one is falsely accused, or that some form of injustice is done, God requires that we have **at least two witnesses**. This means that no one should speak out any form of judgement over someone else unless they have 2-3 people who are in agreement.

Deuteronomy 19:15-16 “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of **two witnesses or of three witnesses** shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing,”

(b) Learn from the best teachers

There are those who are quick to judge. Quick to give their opinions about all and sundry ... these are toxic people. People who will dominate and act in a Jezebel fashion that will cause your hair to stand up or even offend you.

Whenever you are near such people, observe their behaviour / take note of the hurt and wounds that they cause, and ask GOD what can you learn from this ... **not to do the same!**

(c) We are born to love ... we learn to hate

Our natural state is that of loving. A baby instinctively knows by the smile on a father's / mother's faces that they are welcome and will automatically respond. Hatred / judgements are learned habits that come from observing the way in which people (who think that they are superior) react and speak to others.

Make the choice to recognize condescending behaviour and negative remarks that will break down your image of yourself, and the image of God inside of you, and instead declare God's purpose and calling over your life.

(d) Make a decision ... what type of legacy do you want to pass on?

We have no choice about whatever it is that our ancestors did. What we can do is:

- repent of that ungodly bloodline,
- take note of the Godly attributes that we inherited
- and build on those so that we can pass on to the next generation a legacy of blessing

AMEN

CHAPTER 8

Prison of Hopelessness

There can be no worse feeling / emotion than the feeling of hopelessness. When one loses all hope, then what follows is **depression** ... and depression has the power to take away all forms of life.



Hopelessness is that feeling which says:

- there is no way out,
- I just can't do it,
- the odds are stacked far to strongly against me

When you have an introvert, who is told that they can't do anything right, or an extrovert who is continually broken down by parents / leadership, and we are told "*its just not good enough, or even your brother / sister are much better at it than you are*", **we will set up the pattern for continual failure.**

This continual pressure could then very easily change into two forms of physical abuse:

- i) we stop **eating** and become anorexic
- ii) we start eating everything that we can lay hands on and become **obese**

In both of these cases the level of hopelessness is so great that it's exceptionally difficult to change the direction towards a better health pattern.

How does Hopelessness develop / grow?

(1) A pattern of continuous negative speech and action towards an individual

We cannot overemphasize the effect that continual negative speech towards an individual or the actions of continued abuse (verbal / sexual / violence / bullying), will have on the person. The fact that this is most often carried out by a stronger / bigger / older person, often on a child creates a far more sinister sense of **fear** and **hopelessness** within the victim. If one cannot see any possible "way out" of the situation, and there seems to be no one that you can trust to help, then you will gradually give up.

(2) The person develops a pessimistic outlook on life, nothing ever works out for me.

Hope is bred on one's ability to see and experience some successes in life. If you dream of being a sports person, then you at least want to catch the ball or to be able to run faster than others (this is just common sense). However, if you find that everything that you try ... in this case telling others of the abuse in the hope that they will listen and react, only to find that nothing happens, will cause and set in place a mindset which says "*nothing ever works*".

(3) The person develops an offending conscience. Every small deed or word, however innocent, is perceived as an offence.

Once we no longer see any chance for improvement in our situation, and no longer have faith in our fellowman to help, then the logical progression is to experience every joke / statement or action which places one in a negative light in the worst possible scenario, and to then take offence with that person.

(4) The person starts to develop a complacency spirit, there is no point in even trying anymore.

I do not need to elaborate on this point. Once I have lost all hope in mankind, I will perceive all manner of evil being plotted against me.

(5) The person starts to spend far too much time in unhealthy introspection ...what's wrong with me ... why don't they like me.

Part of healthy living is seeing the need in others and helping them, reaching out to befriend people who are lonely, and generally, just loving your neighbour. However, when you feel that your situation is hopeless, you will turn inwardly and only think of yourself. That continual replay of the events that affected you and the revisiting of the wounds, will only deepen the sense of hopelessness.

(6) The person no longer includes God in their thought process ... its only me / myself and I

Finally, we will find that there is no place for God in this person's thoughts and absolutely no faith that He will be able to do anything to help.

What are the symptoms of hopelessness / depression?

It's quite easy to identify common symptoms of hopelessness / depression. These are:

(a) It overwhelms the spirit

Little or no words of life or of joy — even the smallest of possible decisions comes with much stress and with many tears

(b) It robs us of our sleep

A tell-tale symptom will be the inability to sleep properly, irregular sleep patterns, and the continued use of sleeping tablets.

(c) It seals our lips

We will find that the individual withdraws and fails to communicate in any way. Even the smallest detail of arranging a meeting will become problematic.

(d) It weakens our memory

In simple terms ... it incapacitates us totally.

Examples of Biblical men who suffered from feeling of Hopelessness

In all these cases we will get to understand one thing ... **the feeling of hopelessness is destroying your destiny and your calling.**

i) Elijah, living in a cave

1 Kings 19:4-5 *“But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.”*

ii) David, with the loss of his son ... with Bathsheba

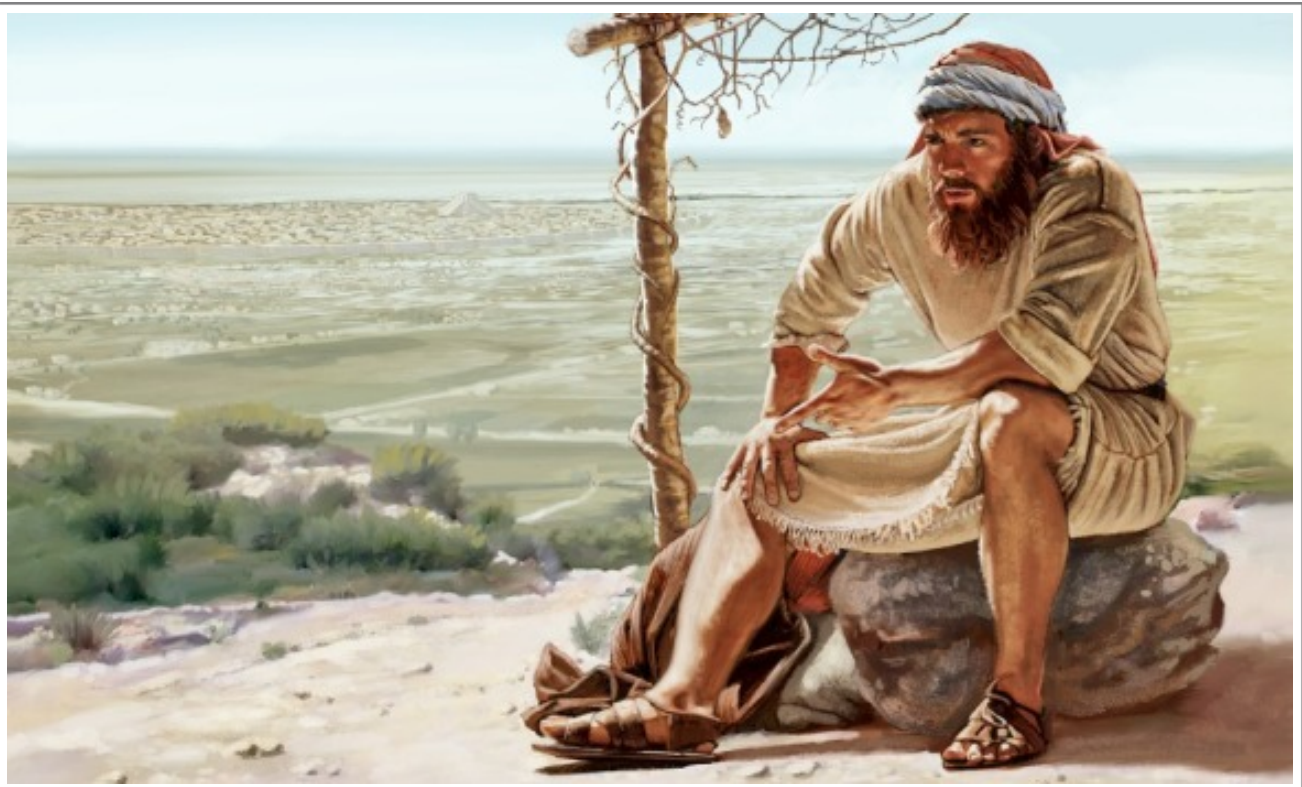
2 Samuel 12:15-18 *“And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. On the seventh day the child died.”*

Psalm 38:4 “For my iniquities have gone over my head; **like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.**”

Psalm 42:11 “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?”

iii) Jonah

Jonah 4:3 “Therefore now, O LORD, **please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.**”



Jonah 4:9 “And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, **angry enough to die.**”

iv) Job

Job 3:11 “Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?”

Job 3:26 “Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is pursued as by the wind, and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.”

Job 30:16-17 “And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have taken hold of me. The night fracks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest.”

v) Jeremiah

Jeremiah 20:14-15 *“Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, “A son is born to you,” making him very glad.”*

vi) Moses

Can you imagine:

- he meets God at the burning bush
- he eventually gets the people to leave
- he takes them through the Reed Sea
- he reveals God’s love in multiple miracles ... brackish water that turn sweet / Manna every day, and yet they will reject God at the scene of the **Golden Calf**



Surely, he had the right to feel that everything is hopeless?

Exodus 32:31-32 *“They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin - but if not, please blot me out of Your Book that You have written.”*

How do we overcome

a) Hope in God

We trust in God. We have the example of many men in the Bible, who found themselves in difficult situations where they lost hope, yet **their faith in God’s faithfulness** pulled them through.

Psalm 34:18 *“The LORD is near to the **brokenhearted** and saves the **crushed in spirit.**”*

Colossians 1:4-6 *“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **because of the hope laid up for you in Heaven.** Of this you have heard before in the Word of the Truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing - as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in Truth,”*

Psalm 50:15 *“and call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”*

b) Joy in salvation

We know that God has a plan ... we know that whatever happens to us is part of the trials and tribulations which Y'shua / Jesus warned us about. Critically, He told us that:

- He would send the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter
- and that we would NEVER be tested beyond our means

Luke 24:44-49 *“Then He said to them, “These are My Words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. **And behold, I am sending the Promise of My Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.**”*

c) We should decide to actively love our neighbour.

No matter what pain and hardship you have experienced, there are many who are far worse off than you are. We can reach out and help someone else ... in that process you will lift up your own spirit and GROW.

d) Learn to resolve conflicts.

You cannot cover all problems with a layer of sugar / chocolate and trust that it will get better. **Denial** of a problem will only aggravate your sense of hopelessness. However, every problem / conflict situation handled will be a weight off your shoulders and a milestone towards your recovery.

e) Determine to be courageous.

It take courage, not to be discouraged. Even the man who walked closely with Moses through the wilderness and who is chosen to be the general that takes the people into the Land of Canaan, needed to be told by God and Moses to stand and take courage. FOUR times BEFORE he went into battle (and remember he was the general that lead every battle campaign whilst they were on the journey to the Land of Promise).

Joshua 1:5-9 *“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. **Be strong and courageous**, for you shall cause this people to inherit the Land that I swore to their fathers to give them. **Only be strong and very courageous**, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous**. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*

Hope is an investment in thinking about a legacy

Remember, that God has blessed each one of us with **unique talents and gifts** ... the **talents** allow you to:

- do business
- be a sports-star
- be an ordinary man in the street who earns a decent living,

while your **gifts** enable you to be a blessing in the Body of Messiah.

God has predetermined when you will live, where you will live, and in which community of people you will function. And only you have the gifts that are needed for such a time as this ... **be an Esther.**

Romans 8:24-25 *“For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.**”*

f) Truth is transformative

We may have experienced bad things which have formed our thinking patterns. However, Gods Words are Truth. As we absorb the TRUTH of the Word, we get transformed from Glory to glory.

Romans 15:13 *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”*

Romans 8:26-30 *“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the Will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.”*

AMEN

CHAPTER 9

PRISON OF Unforgiveness

In this session we are going to look at the action of living in unforgiveness

Let us start with some statements.

- ◆ My forgiveness of someone does not spiritually cleanse them from their actions
- ◆ My forgiveness of someone else **empowers me to free myself** ... It is something I do for myself
- ◆ My forgiveness does NOT take away the consequences for the other party ... if you have stolen you may still go to jail - if you have been unfaithful, you may still end in divorce



Romans 12:19 *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

Hebrews 10:30-31 *"For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God"*

- ◆ My forgiveness is not about cutting something out, but **it's about letting go**
- ◆ My forgiveness means that I have chosen to spend time on my healing and not on focusing on the wrong done to me
- ◆ My forgiveness means that I am dealing with the **anger** of the injustice committed to me. The hiding of that anger is self-destructive and will be bottled up to explode later, possibly towards the wrong individuals

What are the consequences of not Forgiving?

1. We negate our walk with God

In the process of hating someone or keeping them bound by our frustration and our anger / fears we end up moving away from God. Our focus on the person / the injustice consumes our minds, meaning that we have no space for God in our lives.

It is a recognized spiritual principle ... **we either have faith and love** in our hearts or we be **afraid** - the two cannot cohabit in our hearts.

1 John 4:20-21 *"If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this Commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."*

2. We become unhealthy

This type of unforgiveness consumes the mind and eventually the body. We will become mentally stressed out, and later on will find that we are eating / sleeping badly, and still later on we will experience other sicknesses in our bodies.

Psalm 32:1-5 *"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your Hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer." Selah*

Psalm 32:5 *"I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." Selah*

3. We will be sad / will have no JOY

Continual unforgiveness, will result in **a desire to revenge** ... whilst we may ask God to take vengeance, we will be seeking retribution. Those feeling of bitterness will consume all happiness that we can possibly find.

Proverbs 15:17 *“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is **than a fattened ox and hatred with it.**”*

Hebrews 12:15 *“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; **that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;**”*

Job 17:15 *“... where then is my hope? Who will see my hope?”*

4. We will lose all hope

Unforgiveness is the **beginning of a path towards bitterness**. Then a total lack of joy, and finally, we end in a state of depression. It's true, some bad things happened to you, but these things do not define you.

You are defined as being made in the Image of God and by the talents and the gifts that He has given to you. You have **potential** ... which is unaffected by the injustice committed to you.

Don't lose hope over the actions of other people.

Job 8:13 *“Such are the paths of all who forget God; the **hope** of the godless shall perish.”*

5. We can lose all privileges of our legacy

We are given the opportunity to live to our potential ... we are empowered to be role models to the next generation.

If we fail to deal with this tribulation, we can easily cause the next generation to fail in their purpose as well.

Exodus 20:5-6 *“You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your GOD am a jealous GOD, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My Commandments.**”*

Y'shua / Jesus teaches about the Sycamore Tree



Y'shua Jesus speaks about unforgiveness and uses this analogy.

Luke 17:1-4 *“And He said to His disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.*

*Pay attention to yourselves! **If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.***

Luke 17:5 *The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” And the Lord said, “**If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.***

Let us define some of the points that He makes so that we can understand why unforgiveness is such a BIG issue.

(a) This tree has a huge and deep root structure

In order to withstand the heat of the desert sun, the low rainfall in this area, this tree digs deep to find underground water.

In exactly that same way the roots of bitterness / unforgiveness will dig deep down into your soul and infect you for a long time ... just think about the family feuds that have existed and still remain in place for generations.

(b) This tree produces a fruit that is very bitter to eat

The fruit has an amazing appearance ... it looks good to eat ... similar to other fruits - but when you taste it you will find that its extremely bitter. People who fail to forgive produce the same kind of fruit. They continue to rehash the pain and continue to impact those close to them - in season after season that fruit of unforgiveness remains in place.

(c) This tree is only pollinated by wasps

No bee will go near there, simply because it will not produce good honey.

What do wasps do? They will sting you repeatedly. *Is this not true of people who fail to forgive their unforgiveness / bitterness / hatred?* They will lash out at everyone around them causing continual hurt to those in their path.

Y'shua / Jesus says *"Unforgiveness starts off like a small mustard seed but can go into a huge tree"* ... **be careful!**

Parable that defines the consequences of Unforgiveness

We have a parable which defines the consequences of unforgiveness. The message is in fact so clear that everyone who reads it should RUN to repent.

The story goes about a man who has huge debt and asks that he be released from this burden. Shortly after this, he goes to someone who owes him very little, fails to forgive and has the man put in jail.

When the king who originally forgave, hears about this , he has the man thrown in prison.

Matthew 18.21-22 *"Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."*

Matthew 18:23-35 *"Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.*

And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you? And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also My Heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

In other passages we get to understand the following consequences of not forgiving:

(a) ***If we fail to forgive, we become defiled. This means that we cannot be seen as pure and holy and can therefore CANNOT enter into the Tabernacle.***

Can you imagine ... you cannot enter the Heavenly Court Room to plead your case ... you cannot come before Y'shua to receive a blessing ... YOU CANNOT BE A PRIEST IN THE LIVING STONE TABERNACLE. You are in a very real sense "outside the camp".

Hebrews 12:14-15 "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;"

(b) ***If we fail to forgive others we allow Satan an opportunity to infiltrate our lives. If he can infiltrate your life, then you have also opened the doorway into the rest of your family.***

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 "Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure - not to put it too severely - to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."



Our Calling

1. To be kind-hearted / forgiving all who have hurt / wronged us, AS GOD FORGAVE US

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**"

2. Consider praying the LORD'S prayer

Matthew 6:12-13 "... and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

3. Forgiveness means that you are growing in Spiritual maturity

Philippians 3:13-16 "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. **But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.**"

AMEN

Priestly Blessing

Numbers 6:24-27

“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.
May YHVH bless you and keep you.

Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.
May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.

Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.
May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:27 *“In this way they are to put **My Name** on the people of Isra’el, so that I will **Bless** them.”*

