

Courageous Hearts
“With All My Heart, I Will Love You”
Session Two
“Family Secrets”
“Past Pain = Present Problems?”

Isaiah 55: 8-9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Once we understand that God’s ways really are vastly different than ours and He truly does have a purpose for each of us, then we can accept that we only know what we know (What is in our “glass”). We can ask God to humble us and help us to see how much more He wants to teach us and shed light and truth on. We can ask God to heal our hearts and straighten out all the thoughts that have been twisted by the enemy.

“Life Happens” to all of us. Those experiences can be used by the enemy to damage and destroy all our relationships. Satan wants us to become bitter, to experience isolation, and to be entangled in conflict. He twists the truth and feeds us lies and wants us to believe them. He wants us to only use our skills, our knowledge and anything else we know (our glass) to cope with life to the very best of our ability. In other words, he wants us to walk entirely in our flesh.

The Bible says to walk in the flesh is sin. Walking in the flesh is doing anything in your own strength independently from God. When we walk in the flesh someone will feel unloved and isolated.

I Peter 5:8 “Be of Sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. He will try to accomplish that any way he can.”

Rom 8:5-8 NASB “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so , and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Isaiah 64: 6b “And all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”

However, Praise God, Jesus wants to use those exact same “Life Happens” moments to work for the good in each of our lives so we can each become a better person and be a better witness for Him. So we can experience intimacy and unconditional love. So we can believe His truths instead of Satan’s lies and walk in the Spirit as we live an abundant life in Christ.

When we walk in the Spirit, others will feel loved by us because we are loving them with God’s love flowing through us. They will not feel rejected or isolated.

We need to decide who we will listen to and who we will follow. The same “Life Happens” moments can either give our purpose to our lives or we can let them destroy us.

Isaiah 41:10 “So 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.”

When two people use their flesh patterns to cope with life, a circle of destruction can be created where each of them triggers the other person’s flesh pattern. In our story, Sarah withdrew and shut down

because she believed the lie that Jeff was going to break up with her. When she withdrew to protect herself, Jeff felt rejected and eventually turned to pornography. This made Sarah again feel unimportant and that Jeff was not interested in her, starting once again their circle of destruction.

Courageous Hearts Assignment

You will need the following items for the canning jar assignment:

Glass jar filled with water and lid, 3-4 cups worth of stones (large, medium, and pebbles), red food coloring, cloth, notebook and pen.

Again, you should find a quiet place to do this exercise. We aren't trying to fix anything or dredge up difficult feelings. You simply drop a rock into the jar and, as you do, tell God, "This represents the time ____ (person) _____ hurt me by ____ (what they did) _____. For each rock, make a note in your notebook. For now, we just want to make visible some of the things that have happened in life by the rocks in the jar and acknowledge that there is stuff in our jars and in our hearts. We will let God speak to our hearts later about what we are supposed to do with these rocks. We need eight more chapters for that!

The **Jar** represents our mind. We receive information daily through the mind.

The **Lid** represents our will. We make decisions from the information we have received in our heart and mind.

What's **in the jar** represents our emotions. The **Water** represents our pure God given emotions. The **Rocks** represent our damaged emotions. Over time these rocks turn into strongholds. The enemy can lie to us though these and influence us to lean on flesh patterns to survive.

The **Red food color** represents our spiritual condition, alive in Christ, born again and spiritually alive.

The **Cloth** represents our body.

We are made of a body, a spirit and a soul. Our soul is made up of our mind, our will, and our emotions. If we are to love God or anyone else the way God commands us to love, then we need balance in our soul. I'm not meaning 33% mind, 33% emotions, etc. I mean that all three areas need to be active, engaged and available to the Holy Spirit for His use.

Most people lean heavily on one of these or a combination of just two and leave the other one or two shut down. As will be explained more farther along in the class, this can create isolation in our relationships with others.

Think about your close relationships. Do they feel cautious, strained or guarded? If you answered yes, would you be willing to pray this prayer? *"Jesus, is there anything in my heart that is causing this relationship to be strained? Would you show me over the next few weeks what it is? Thank you. Amen."*

Group Discussion

1. Have you ever met someone who leans heavily on their intellect, emotions or their will? Without naming this person, share in general what that imbalance looked like.
2. Have you ever met someone who had a nice balance? Was that appealing? What did it look like?