

**Courageous Hearts**  
**“With All My Heart, I Will Love you”**  
**Session Four**  
**“Having Everything, Yet Having Nothing”**

*My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare. – Psalms 25:15*

I Corinthians Chapter 13 reveals the importance of love. In that chapter we see that without love we are nothing – no matter what we know, how we live, what we accomplish, etc. If love is really that important to God, then it is important that we, too, love correctly. When we love the way God intended and by the example Jesus gave us, unconditionally, only then can others really feel loved by us. If we think we’re loving people, but they don’t feel loved, then something is wrong. We love others properly as we allow the Holy Spirit to love through us.

Strongholds in our hearts trigger flesh patterns in our lives that prevent us from loving others unconditionally. Flesh patterns cause conflicts (evidence, clues) that move people toward isolation.

Everything in life that enters through our senses is filtered through our hearts (think about the canning jar representing what’s in our heart).

Each stronghold affects us emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. When all of this information gets tweaked by our damaged heart, it alters our relationships, our attitudes, our thoughts, actions, passions, our goals, dreams, how sensitive we are, etc.

*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.”*

God’s thoughts and ways truly are vastly different than ours. Our thoughts and ways are like a few drops of water in a glass and His are like Niagara Falls. Let’s look at this difference in real life as we look closely at how the world views conflict and how God views it.

**Worldly view of conflict:** For the most part, people hate conflict. It is to be avoided and is the opposite of being happy! We either want to win the conflict or we just want it over with! Our focus is on the other person’s actions or faults. During conflict, we may use yelling, “the silent treatment,” attacking or complete submission, arguing, defending oneself or attacking the other person, ongoing debate or a plan of self-protection. Perhaps a person just shuts down and leaves. Conflicts take on many forms but every form has several common denominators. 1) They are all caused because flesh patterns are being used; 2) when flesh patterns are used, someone will not feel loved; 3) we will do OK until the same issue comes up again and then we have to deal with it again; and 4) your children are learning your flesh patterns and will emulate them to some degree as adults. If conflicts continue and go unresolved they will create isolation.

**God views conflict as a gift to us:** Now that is different! He actually wants us to take advantage of a conflict and let Him speak to our heart. If we could look past the other person’s fault and ask God (praying out loud) to make the enemy go away so we could care about that person’s heart, then God will do that. God also wants us to ask questions like, “What is in my heart causing me to act this way right now?” or “Why

can't I love this person right now?" "What is in my heart keeping me from caring about them or loving them?" Our focus is aimed at our own heart and not the other person's fault. Now, that's different.

God wants us to take advantage of conflict, not just wish for it to be over. He will help us look for and examine the evidence of flesh patterns. Then He will help us discover the source of the stronghold that triggered the flesh patterns that caused the conflict. And when the conflict is resolved properly, many future would-be conflicts are resolved and prevented in this same area. That also is very different.

When we really resolve a stronghold, we resolve it for good! The first step to resolve it is to:

1. Look for evidence of flesh patterns.
2. Follow the evidence back to the stronghold.
3. While in your heart and with Jesus' help, forgive the offender from the heart.
4. Ask Jesus to remove the stronghold from the enemy and give it to Him for His control.
5. Ask Jesus to fill that area of your heart with His Love and any other of His characteristics.

Here is the example of the forgiveness prayer given out in the class.

### **Forgiveness Prayer**

*"Jesus, I choose to forgive my dad for spanking me over and over for not knowing how to tell time , causing me to feel stupid, afraid, unloved hurt and under a lot of pressure . I don't want to hate my dad . I don't want him to have to pay for the sin he did to me. I just want to let it all go.*

*"Jesus, Satan got a stronghold in my heart that day through my anger, my fear and my unforgiveness and he has been using it as a base of operation in my life to slowly destroy me. Will you take back that stronghold from the enemy and I want you to have control of that area of my heart. Please fill that area with your Holy Spirit, and with your peace and love. Please forgive me for hating my dad and being so angry with him ."*

Evidence of a flesh pattern is one of a wide variety of outwardly observed behaviors or "clues," that can reveal an inner-heart problem. Each form of evidence creates difficulty in our relationships, how we view ourselves and in our relationship with God. Some examples are: anger, sexual difficulties, low self-esteem, gossip, judgmental attitudes, critical spirit, etc. Others are washing hands 200 times a day, biting your nails until they bleed, not trusting anyone, insensitivity, inability to emotionally connect with people, etc. These are only a few of many examples. Some evidences are discovered by looking closely at the patterns of our lives (workaholic, never relaxing, withdrawn, etc.) or by simply looking at your close relationships. Are those relationships comfortable or do you find yourself guarded around them. Is the relationship strained or even severed?

### **Where can we find these evidences?**

Evidences of flesh patterns are all around us. We just need to look for them. We can use our five senses of hearing, touch, sight, smell and taste to discover evidences. Evidence can be found in most situations: in our actions that reveal our weaknesses; in our repetitive arguing; in our addictive behaviors; and moments when we give in to temptation and sin. Evidence can be found in all those things we don't want to admit to ourselves and (certainly) don't want to admit to others. The world says to hide this stuff and keep it secret.

That is how Satan hooks us and keeps deceiving us. God says move closer to it, take advantage of it, examine it and bring it into His light to be set free from it.

The Bible says there is power in the sin in us. If and when we allow ourselves to stay hooked by the deception of the enemy, we give him power.

The good news is – we are in control of our heart. We get to decide who we will serve and to whom we will give our heart. Forgiveness from the heart through Jesus Christ will set us free and allow us to love God with more of our heart.

### **Courageous Hearts Assignment:**

1. In your notebook will you make a list of evidences of flesh patterns in your life that are not emulating Christ.
2. Is there any offense so bad that you could not forgive a loved one, a friend or even a stranger? What would some of those offenses be? Is the price of unforgiveness worth what it will cost you?
3. Many times we forgive someone from our head and are deceived, because unforgiveness still remains in our heart. Ask yourself the following questions to see if any unforgiveness remains in your heart.
  - Do you remember the many details of the offense: Do you still feel hurt, afraid or angry?
  - Do you experience anxiety, tightness of chest, anger or fear when the person's name is mentioned?
  - Do you refuse to talk about something?
  - Are your feelings numb or shut off emotionally at times when you should be feeling something? Or do you display feelings in the opposite way by raging "off the chart" or crying all the time?
  - Do you experience the same fear, anger, frustration, or inferiority today that you felt during the offense long ago? You may say, "Why am I acting the same way I did at 5 or 15" (or whatever age)?
  - Do you secretly feel hate and wish bad things to happen to the offender or rejoice when they have difficult times?
  - Do you find fault in others and verbally blame and criticize them for your current problems?

These are just a few of the clues revealing unforgiveness from the heart. Are you brave enough to ask Jesus, "*Jesus, do you want me to forgive any sin done to me? Will you help me forgive?*"

### **Group Discussion**

1. Explain how conflict can be a good thing.
2. Why should forgiveness be from the heart and not the head?
3. What are flesh patterns? Give examples?