

Destructive Emotions #8

“The Choice is Yours”

Hebrews 12:1-2

In the very beginning of this series on *Destructive Emotions* we talked about excess baggage. It is a fact that Satan does everything he can to overload us with the baggage of the world and the entangling cares of life. God, on the other hand, wants us to unload everything He never gave us in the first place.

It is easy to get our spiritual eyes fixed so firmly on the problems of life, that we completely overlook the blessings. As a result, we end up suffering through situations that should have us rejoicing.

The truth of the matter is that life is filled with contradictions and complexities, but there are generally two kinds of “weight” that find their way into our lives. *One*, the weight that comes to us through life, circumstances, and other people; and *two*, the weight we pile on ourselves.

As you go through life, there will always be people or things that Satan will use to oppose your walk with Christ. And when that happens, you only have two choices: focus on them and struggle, or focus on Christ and live in victory. But the real problem that I see is this, we overload ourselves with self-imposed limitations, personal problems, and financial dilemmas that have nothing to do with other people. They are things based on poor choices, low self-esteem, or greed. And truthfully, there is no one at fault here but you.

Look with me once more at our text in Hebrews 12:1 where we have been given these instructions, “Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses (the witness of those people of faith described in Hebrews 11), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us...” Having said that, I want to draw your to the invitation of Jesus found in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

There are some major truths that we need to see from these passages of Scripture.

First, we are told to “lay aside every *weight*, and the *sin* which doth so easily beset us...” It is easy to see that Paul is talking about two different things here: “weight” and “sin.”

It is obvious that Paul is talking about things that hinder us in our “race.” It is also obvious that the “race” that Paul is referring to here is that life of faith and obedience, that pursuit of personal holiness, to which God has called us.

Having understood that, it is also obvious that there are some things in our life that is not necessarily classified as “sin” but they hinder our spiritual growth and the effectiveness of our testimony. Therefore, the “weight” that Paul is referring to here is those kinds of things. 1 Peter 2:11 says this, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, “Having therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” And Romans 12:1-2 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The common denominator that connects these passages of Scripture together is “soul,” spirit,” and “mind.” All of these have to do with emotions.

I am convinced that one of the greatest hindrances to living the Christian life is not a lack of faith, but attitude. Through my years of ministry, I have seen some absolutely wonderful, spirit-filled, Christians destroyed by their attitude. I am telling you when one’s attitude gets out of balance, we open the “emotional door” for all kinds of destructive emotions to come running through. Everything from pride, self-righteousness, anger, resentment and on and on!

In other words, it is the destructive emotions that, many times, leads to the besetting sins that hinders us from living the Christian life in its fullness. That challenge that we have before us is simply that if we are going to experience the joy of living life, much less the Christian life, we are going to have to allow our faith to dominate our lives instead of our emotions. The question is: what steps can we take to make that happen?

I am going to close this series by giving you ten steps to will shorten your stay in your destructive emotions.

Number one: take responsibility for your actions. Refuse to become a member of the “no-fault generation” that is hell bent on blaming someone else for their actions. I am well aware that our past has an impact on our present, but my advice today is to get out of the “bone yard” of your past, let God heal you up, and get on with your life.

Number two; be willing to work for what you want. This nation was built on the work ethic. **The Bible says those who wont work should not eat.**

Work is a four-letter word this nation needs to learn again. The truth of the matter is this – God gives no place for laziness in the Bible, nor in His kingdom.

What does work have to do with destructive emotions? Simple, when you develop an attitude that leads to *anger, resentment, bitterness,* and even *depression,* you don't want to go to work. **You just want to say at home and feel sorry for yourself while you are seething in your anger.**

Number three; don't waste time fighting what you cannot change. Do you know why Israel did not go back to Egypt? Not because they were committed to God's program, but because God closed the Red Sea behind them and they couldn't go back. **Ladies and gentlemen, there are some things in your life you cannot change.** Someone has rightly called them “**spilled milk**” items; don't waste your time crying over them. **It's happened. It's over.** So move on with your life.

Did you have an abused childhood? Forgive those involved and move on with your life. **Have you had a bankruptcy?** Work through it and get your stuff back together. **Have gone through a bitter divorce?** Stop rehearsing every unholy and ungodly thing that has been said about you, gather up your self-esteem, and go on with your life. **Have you been betrayed by a dear friend?** Let go of your anger and move on with your life.

Number four; when you are wrong, admit it. Take the consequences. Stop playing the blame game. Stop trying to be the eternal victim. **Stop trying to plead your case before everyone who is courteous enough to speak. Stop whining about your situation, and stop trying to choose up sides.** Face the truth and say you were flat out wrong.

Number five; let go of your grudge and enjoy a life of forgiveness. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:32, “And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” **Just in case you missed it, Colossians 3:13 says, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”** Child of God, forgiveness is not optional. **When you are unwilling to forgive, you are living your life in blatant sin.**

In the corridors of your memory right now, there is probably someone who has hurt you very deeply. And because of your unwillingness to forgive you are destroying your relationship with the very people who love you the

most in your life. The only way you are ever going to break out of that prison is to forgive them, and forgive them totally – not for their sake but for your sake.

Number six; be generous with your time, your talent and your substance. Jesus said in Luke 6:38, “Give and it shall be given unto you.” Everything that God controls gives. The sun gives light. **The earth gives food.** Water gives life. And the Bible says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave...”

Giving is the only proof you have that the cancer of greed does not control you. If there is something inside you that resents giving, that something is not from God. It is from the devil himself.

Number seven; let your mouth be ruled by the law of kindness. The Bible simply says in Ephesians 4:32, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Proverbs 25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.” Proverbs 15:28 says, “The godly think before speaking; the wicked spout evil words.” **In other words, take your time and think about what you are going to say.** Don’t just “spout” out an answer in retaliation, or in defense. Remember, you can never “unsay” what you have already spoken!

Number eight; refuse to indulge in self-pity when life hands you a raw deal. Accept the fact that life is not fair, and nobody gets through it without some measure of sorrow and some measure of misfortune. **Self-pity is sin.** It obliterates God and puts self on the throne of your life.

Listen and remember this, when you get to the “fiery furnace” of life, God will already be there. When you get to the “Red Sea” of impossibilities, God will already be there. When you get to the “Valley of the Shadow of death” He will be waiting to carry you through. I promise, He will give you all you need and so much more!

Number nine; learn to listen. Listening to someone means really listening. This means giving people individual attention. **It means giving the people in your life special attention.** It means putting aside your feelings and trying to understand their point of view.

It means listening to God, listening to your spouse, and listening to your children. I recently read an article that said the average American father listens to his children on an average of 45 seconds a day. Yet the average child watches television hours a day. Who do you think is controlling the way your children think?

Number ten; be a peacemaker. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.” The New International Version says, “Be angry, and yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, and do not give the devil an opportunity to work.” God says, mend your differences. You might be thinking, “But I’m right.” **The issue is not about being right or wrong, the issue is about being obedient to God’s Word and getting your destructive emotions under control.** If you don’t, the devil is going to have a “field day” in your life.

The steps that I have shared with you today all have one thing in common – they involve choice. Life is about choices. The Bible says this in Deuteronomy 30:19, “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.” Listen to what we have been told in Romans 14:7, “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” **No one can make them for you – only you!** But I can promise you this, the choices that you make today will affect, not just your life, but also the lives of those around you.

If you have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, today, you can make the greatest choice of your life.

Everyone please stand for prayer.

Father,

I have been carrying around sakes of shame, worry, pain, resentment, or failure for too long, and they have become too heavy. My arms ache. My heart grieves. Today, I give them to You so that I can live my life in victory. In Jesus’ name. Amen.