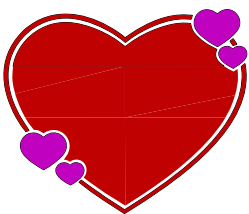
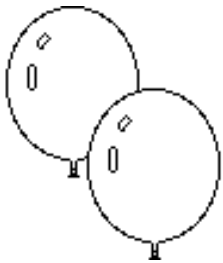


HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *EMOTIONS*

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR:

EMOTIONS
SELF-IMAGE
TRUE GUILT
FALSE GUILT
ANGER
FEAR
ANXIETY
WORRY

DEPRESSION
PERFECTIONISM
INFERIORITY COMPLEX
CRITICAL ATTITUDE
UNFORGIVENESS
LONELINESS
STRESS
INSECURITY
SORROW
JEALOUSY
HOPELESSNESS
BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS
EMOTIONAL MATURITY
HOW TO COUNSEL



EMOTIONS
How To Handle Your
EMOTIONS

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *EMOTIONS*

By Jerry Schmoyer

It seems we are in the midst of an epidemic today -- an epidemic of emotional problems. Psychiatrists and counselors are everywhere. Mental hospitals are full. The suicide rate is increasing. People are looking for answers. God's people aren't immune to this. Satan uses things such as fear, worry, guilt, anger, jealousy, depression and loneliness to defeat Christians. These inner sins lead to outer sin. God wants us to control our emotions, not have them control us. They were made to add zest and



enjoyment to life, not misery and defeat. Controlling our emotions is the key to emotional maturity (II Tim. 1:1-7). We must learn to have our mind explain reality to our emotions, not let our emotions determine our direction (I Peter 5:8). This series is to help with that.

God is the source of our emotions (II Tim. 1:7), but Satan and our sin nature cause us to misuse them. The fruit of the Holy Spirit are actually emotions (Gal. 5). Jesus became emotional at times: crying for Lazarus, grieving in Gethsemane, laughing, and chasing out the money changers in anger (twice!). We can't go to one extreme and deny or suppress them for they are God-given and must be handled correctly or they will cause other problems (including physical ailments). Often men feel it is a weakness to feel or express emotions, and because they never really got in touch with their own emotions they run from them. Others can be over-emotional, using their emotions to manipulate and control others. This is the opposite extreme, thinking that everything we feel is true and right!

Our emotions have a God-given purpose: joy and variety in life, contact with other people and motivate us to action. It is often the ones that are to motivate us to action that often are used in a sinful way. For example, fear has a good purpose when it protects us from real danger, anger motivates us to right a wrong when it is 'righteous indignation,' guilt is to cause us to repent, jealousy is to motivate us to right a relationship going wrong, stress and anxiety are to cause us to take action, etc. The Bible talks about God being angry and jealous. However for the most part we misuse and abuse these emotions.

As we go through this series we will see that God-given emotions are like dessert after a meal -- really an enjoyable experience, but not the main course! They can make your trip through life much nicer, but aren't to be in the driver's seat.

Learn to become familiar with your own feelings. To do this you must be able to give them a word label such as 'fear,' 'anger,' 'jealousy,' 'insecurity,' etc. If you can't correctly label it you can't handle it, and that means it will handle you. Ask God to give you His godly emotions. Pray that your emotions would be pleasing to God. Ask Him to heal you from things in the past that still affect you. All these things will be considered more later. Now just get in touch with your feelings!

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NEXT: HOW TO HANDLE YOUR SELF-IMAGE

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *SELF-IMAGE*

By Jerry Schmoyer

When you look in the mirror, do you like the person you see? When others look at you, what do you think they see? The reason Charlie Brown is so popular is because we can all identify with him. "I wish I knew why people didn't like me" Charlie asks Lucy. She replies, "Do you have a piece of paper? All right, now divide the paper into 10 columns, then put numbers down the left side from one to one hundred. Maybe you'd better call this first sheet 'A'." We all know that feeling, don't we.



How we view ourselves, our self-image, is basic to how we act to others and to God. If you have a poor self image you get terribly hurt if someone criticizes or scolds you, you find it hard to talk when meeting new people, you don't like competition, and you fear trying new things. Your focus is mainly on yourself: what do people think of me. how can I make sure I don't fail or make a fool of myself, etc.? Since sin entered everyone has a faulty self-image. With some it shows, like Charlie Brown. Others hide it behind a mask of competency, like Lucy. The prideful, conceited bully is just as insecure about himself as is the fearful, cowering shy person. Both stem from a poor self image, both focus on self instead of God and others, and both keep a person from being the person God created them to be. Never mistake a poor self image (rejecting what God created) as humility. Humility comes from comparing ourselves to God only, a poor self image is from comparing ourselves to others, something we should never do!

What causes a poor self image? Usually introverts suffer worse, for they are extra sensitive, perfectionistic and analytical. When they feel any kind of rejection from parents or others as a child they assume they are at fault. If a parent in any way or in any area of their life labels them 'failure,' they carry that label the rest of their life. It becomes a terrible bondage, a prison we carry with us.

What is the cure? First, be careful of the focus today in many areas that focuses so much on self worth that it goes to the opposite extreme. What we need is balance, a balanced awareness and acceptance of our strengths as well as our weaknesses. That's what Jesus means when He says we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Mt. 22:36-39). We can't accept the strengths and weaknesses in others if we can't accept them in ourselves. Remember you are made in the image of God, and God doesn't make any junk! God planned the person you were to be before the world was created (Psalm 139:13-16), and He isn't wrong in how he makes us. It's our comparisons with others, our unrealistic expectations, our inability to accept our failures and faults that cause the problem. We expect more of ourselves than God expects of us (Psalm 103:14). Psalm 103 is very good to memorize. Ask yourself how Jesus would describe you if He were introducing you to a friend?

If you are down on yourself it is something that **MUST** be corrected to be the parent, friend and Christian God wants you to be. It will undermine all your relationships and drain all your joy. Confess it as sin, ask God to forgive and restore you, and develop an objective view of your strengths as well as weaknesses. Open yourself up to someone. It might seem risky and bring fear of rejection, but it takes that risk to give others the opportunity to accept and love you as you are (something you should have gotten from your parents). Then you will better be able to accept yourself and allow God to accept you, too. I'd be glad to talk with you personally about this if you'd like. God bless!

NEXT: How To Handle True Guilt

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *TRUE GUILT*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Guilt. Even the word brings misery. Hal Lindsey says that guilt is the most crippling disease in the world today. Guilt is fundamental to almost every problem of the human personality. Everyone must deal with guilt in order to mature.

Guilt is a state of awareness of accountability for violating a law of God or man. Guilt isn't always bad, in fact God built guilt into us for a good purpose. Unfortunately we often can't tell true guilt from false guilt. This time we will look at true guilt and next at false guilt. God built guilt into man as a warning light on the dashboard of his conscience. It is to get man to turn from the sin. Ignoring true guilt is like ignoring the oil light on your dashboard. You can cover it with tape and pretend its not lit, but you'll suffer worse consequences for doing so. The same is true for guilt.



All men stand guilty before God because of inherited sin (guilt from Adam's sin - Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:3; 4:18), imputed sin (born with a sin nature from our parents - Rom. 5:12), and individual acts of sin (I Jn. 1:8-10; Rom. 3:23). Thus guilt is ever present, reminding us of our sin and failure.

People today try all kinds of false ways to remove their guilt. Some, like Freud, deny there is any such thing as guilt. Others lose themselves in the lives of others (athletes, rock singers, soap opera personalities). Many rationalize their guilt, just explain it away (I Sam. 15) or convince themselves it is someone else's fault (Gen 3 Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent). In addition, people may try to compensate for it, pay for the past wrongs with present good (like Jacob giving gifts to Esau). Repression and denial is the most dangerous for it creates a time bomb effect when it goes off (Psalm 32, 51). The worst response is giving up, accepting guilt as inevitable. This leads to hopelessness and suicide (Judas - Mt. 27:3-5).

What is the right cure for true guilt? Admit your guilt and confess the sin that caused it (I John 1:8-10). If you have confessed it or there is no sin to confess, then it is false guilt (next time). Accept Jesus' forgiveness (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:1; 8:15; Eph. 1:6). Remember, all sin is equal in God's sight (Ps. 85:2; 103:3; Isa. 55:7)). God does not keep a record of past sins (Psalm 130:3). When we confess a sin, God completely forgets and removes it forever (Micah 7:19; Jer. 31:34; Col. 2:13-14). You can't go by your feelings, but you must claim God's promise of forgiveness. Remember, let your mind explain reality to your emotions. God says it is forgiven, and how you 'feel' about it doesn't matter (Rom. 12:1-2). Feelings are not our final determining factor in understanding reality, but faith in God's written word is. God says your guilt is forgiven if you confess, and so it is!

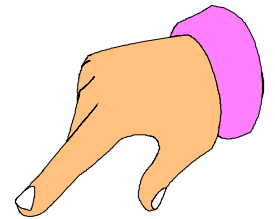
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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *FALSE* *GUILT*

By Jerry Schmoyer

There is a joke about a man who got a dishwasher for his wife so he could relax and read the paper after meals. "You never helped with the dishes!" she said. "I know," he replied. "But now I can sit down to read without feeling guilty about it!" Was that man's guilt true or false guilt? It's easier to tell in someone else's life, but how can you tell in your own life when your guilt is true or false?



Last time we said true guilt is a state of awareness of accountability for violating a law of God or man. False guilt is a feeling of condemnation for violating a law that has been accurately imposed on your conscience (Rom. 14:14,23).

TRUE GUILT	FALSE GUILT
Spiritual	Emotional
From violation of a true law of God or man	From one's emotional training in past
Focuses around one particular sin	Generalized sense of guiltiness in all things
Brought by conviction of Holy Spirit	Brought by our maladjusted emotions
God-centered	Self-centered
Brings positive results: confess & restored	Brings negative results: self punishment
From sin	From improper early conditioning
Holy Spirit works through conscience	Own over-critical conscience built in
Cured by God's forgiveness	Cured by counseling & understanding

While true guilt is necessary, there is no guilt that come from false guilt. On the other hand, false guilt can lead to many physical, social, emotional and spiritual problems. It causes a constant drain on your emotional batteries and keeps you from having that energy for other things you need in life. The leading cause of false guilt comes early in life, when we are told things are bad or wrong that really aren't. Unless we renew our mind in Jesus (Rom. 12:1-2) we spend our whole life feeling guilty for things we shouldn't: not washing the kitchen floor each week, taking a rest when there is work to be done, spending money for our own enjoyment, having problems and needing help from others, feeling sexual urges and desires, etc. It's built into us from little on that sin/guilt means punishment (steal a cookie and your hand gets spanked). Thus as adults when we feel guilt we often punish ourselves (physically or emotionally) in an attempt to remove the guilt (masochism). The ultimate self-punishment, Satan's goal for us, is suicide (as with Judas).

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What's the cure? Reprogram your conscience by studying God's word, counseling, prayer, etc., so it lines up with God's will and not all the false guilt that was built into you in the past. Live by grace, no legalism. Accept God's grace and love in your life. Watch how Satan puts false guilt into your mind to defeat you. Rebuke it. It's a battle to change this in your thinking, but a battle well worth fighting and winning! Begin now -- let me know if I can help you!
NEXT: How To Handle Your Anger

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR ANGER

By Jerry Schmoyer

Do you ever get angry? Do you enjoy getting angry? Do you want to do something about it? If so, keep reading. Almost everyone faces problems with anger. Anger is an emotional reaction of hostility which brings displeasure to you or others. The Bible says anger is as bad a sin as murder, for they share the same motive (Mt. 5:21-22; Job 5:2; 19:29; Prov. 19:19; 25:28; Eccl. 7:9).



Some experts say as many as 90% of our physical ailments have emotional causes, and anger is one of the strongest. Anger is like a boomerang -- you aim it at someone else but it comes back to clobber you. A rattlesnake when cornered gets so frenzied it bites itself. No one likes to be around an angry person. It drains all emotional energy. Spiritually it separates man from God. Remember, "anger" is one letter away from "danger." Call it what you want: sarcasm, jealousy, revenge, criticism, bitterness, resentment, gossip, envy or frustration -- it's still all anger.

Anger, like other emotions we have seen, can be both sinful or sinless. Sinful anger is a secondary emotion, coming from a deeper emotion that isn't being handled correctly. These are hurt/pain, not getting our own way, or fear/insecurity. Let's look at them one at a time. 1. HURT, PAIN. When we hit our finger with a hammer we feel pain, but we get angry. Anger is an easier emotion to handle than pain. When someone we love hurts us we get angry. Instead of allowing us to admit, recognize and handle pain, we often get angry and try to pass the pain on to someone else. Examples are Balaam hitting his donkey when it hurt his leg and Simeon & Levi murdering the man who raped Dinah. 2. NOT GETTING OUR OWN WAY. When someone cuts off on the road or we don't get a promotion at work we often respond with anger. This comes from our pride. Examples are Cain killing Able, the brother of the prodigal son, Ahab killing Naboth to get his vineyard, Ahasuerus banishing Vashti, and Moses striking the rock 2 times. 3. FEAR, INSECURITY. When someone proves you wrong, when you lose your job, or anything threatens, it is easier to respond in anger than facing the underlying fear or insecurity. Examples are Saul trying to kill David, Paul killing Stephen, Peter cutting off the soldier's ear in Gethsemane, Herod killing the Bethlehem babies, and the Jews trying to kill Jesus. If you have a problem with anger carry a paper and pencil and every time you feel tempted to anger write down what happened (1, 2 or 3). You will see a pattern and can then head the anger off and handle the underlying emotion the correct way.

Sometimes we should get angry (Eph. 4:26-27). Proper anger motivates us to take action to correct an unfair situation, that's why it is called 'righteous indignation.' Not getting angry when we should is as sinful as getting angry when we shouldn't. When law or principle is abused or broken, when evil prospers, when innocent are taken advantage, we are commanded to get angry. Jesus did at the money changers, Jonathan did at his father for trying to kill David. Nehemiah did at those who took advantage of children. Elihu did at the ones criticizing Job. If it's not for one of the

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three reasons given above, and if you feel Jesus would get angry at it if He were here, then it is sinless anger. If not it is sinful. Remember, though, even sinless anger mustn't be allowed to rule and control you (Eph. 4:26-27).

Only God can give you the self control (a fruit of the Spirit) to have victory over anger, but you need to ask Him for it. Humble yourself and continually rely on His strength moment by moment to have victory over this.

NEXT: How To Handle Your Fear

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR FEAR

By Jerry Schmoyer

Several years ago some hunters in Guam found a Japanese soldier who had been hiding in the jungle since 1944. His health was terrible and he was miserable. He was afraid to believe the war was over and come out of hiding. What a way to live! And yet how many of us are prisoners of fear in ways even worse?



Everyone faces fear. It was man's first reaction to sin - Adam and Eve hid from God because they were afraid (Gen. 3:10). Fear can be crippling emotionally and socially. It can cause many physical ailments, too. It is the opposite of faith. It hides under different names but all are fear: hesitancy, depression, loneliness, cowardice, inferiority, haughtiness, withdrawal, over aggression, shyness, timidity, indecision, doubt, worry and anxiety.

Fear, too, can be sinful or sinless. Sinful fear doesn't come from God (II Tim. 1:7), instead it separates us from God. There is no peace, and peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Sinless fear motivates us to do something positive (keep from pare or poisonous snakes, be careful when up high, respect and obey those in authority and/or God). You can tell the difference in yourself when you analyze what the fear motivates you to do: draw closer to God and be alert to the danger, or panic and lose your peace and trust in God. Ask yourself what Jesus would do.

The only cure for sinful fear is faith in God. When Peter was afraid the boat he was in would sink he got his eyes on Jesus and, in faith, walked on the water to Jesus. Then when he got his eyes off Jesus and onto his surroundings he started to sink because his faith failed. He got his eyes back on Jesus and reached out to Jesus to lift him back into the boat. That is how it is with us, too. Memorize Scriptures such as Isa. 12:2 41:10; 54:17; II Tim 1:7; Rev. 1:17-18; Ps. 56:3, etc., and quote them to yourself when faced with fear to help you keep your eyes on Jesus.

Fear can make life miserable, but when we realize God is in control of everything and does what is best for us (Rom. 8:28ff) we have nothing to fear. We fear that which we can't control, that which can cause us pain, but knowing God is in sovereign control of everything and He is motivated in all He does by love for us should make us trust Him.

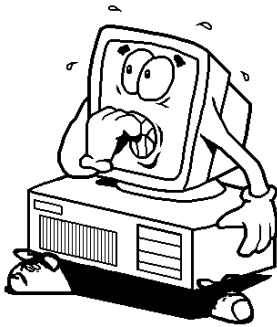
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We can either have fear or faith - not both. One drives out the other. Which do you allow to rule and reign on the throne of your heart? It's your choice, you know. Make the right one!

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR ANXIETY

By Jerry Schmoyer

Do you get irritated over petty things? Do you find yourself critical of others? Do you often feel sorry for yourself? Do you have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep despite being very tired? Are you distracted? Do minor disappointments throw you? Have you lost the joy and peace in life? Do you feel trapped? If you answer frequently to several of these the reason could be anxiety. Anxiety refers to inner turmoil, feeling pulled in two directions. While fear consciously recognizes the object to which it is attached, anxiety is more vague, like a free-floating fear. Anxiety has become so common today we often don't distinguish it from other feelings.



Left untreated, anxiety can cause many physical, social, emotional and spiritual problems. When our emotional battery is drained we don't have energy for things we need. What causes anxiety? It could be childhood conflicts that have been repressed. It could be unconscious inner conflicts which build like a volcano until they explode, causing destruction on everyone nearby. A person who is around others who are anxious finds themselves becoming anxious, too. Present problems which we don't trust God with can make us feel anxious. So can guilt, having a poor self image.

There is a sinless anxiety which motivates us to get serious and do what needs to be done when it needs to be done (to not lose a job or relationship, etc.). The anxiety we usually face and which defeats us is sinful anxiety, though. Instead of making us more alert and productive, it makes us less so. The world uses various medications, drugs, music, entertainment of enjoyable activities to remove anxiety. At best all they do is mask it.

So what is the cure? Philippians 4 gives it. 1. Praise God no matter what (v. 4). We know in our mind God loves us and does everything for our best, it is just our emotions that say differently. Which should be go by? Our minds, of course! Knowing God loves and cares for us no matter what is certainly something to praise Him for (I Thes. 5:16-18)!. 2. Keep your poise at all times (v. 5a). "Gentleness" in v. 5 means moderation, balance, stability, maturity, self-control. Let your mind explain reality to your emotions. Don't let your feelings run your life, but have self-control to have your mind run things. 3. Pray to God about it (v. 6) Take any and every anxiety to God and leave it there! 4. Rely on God's perfect peace (v. 7). Don't look to circumstance to give you peace, trust God to give it to you despite circumstances. 5. Think about positive, good things (v. 8). Get mentally tough. Only let thoughts God would want you to have into your mind. 6. Focus on Godly behavior (v. 9). Make sure there is no sin, however small or unrelated it seems, in your life. 7. Focus on others, not yourself (v. 10). Don't be self-centered. 8. Be content in whatever circumstance God has you (v. 11-12). We don't have to be anxious, God has provided a way out. Read Philippians 4

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over and over, for there you'll find the key to victory over your anxiety.

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR WORRY

By Jerry Schmoyer

I have a Born Loser cartoon which has the husband saying to his wife, "I have so many worries that if anything should happen to me today it'll be two weeks before I can worry about it." We smile at that because we can identify with it! It often seems our minds are programmed like the life savor dispensers - remove one worry and another instantly takes its place. We may call it concern, burden, care, distraction, or even our 'cross,' but it is still worry. Changing names doesn't change what it is.



Worry can undermine our health. There is something to the phrase 'worried sick.' No one likes to be around 'worry warts.' Worry uses up tremendous amounts of emotional energy without doing any good. Our word 'worry' comes from an old English word meaning 'to strangle, to choke.' Worry deprives us of joy and enjoyment.

Worry is sin because it shows lack of faith in God. It hinders God working in our lives. It is a terrible spiritual testimony to others. Unfortunately we often label people who worry as people who care, are conscientious, and are concerned about others. It's as if worry can somehow change things! The Bible forbids us to worry (Eph. 5:1; Mt. 6:25-34). There is no positive side to it, no such thing as sinless worry.

The cause of worry is lack of faith. It's not the greatness of our troubles but the smallness of our faith that makes us complain. If we worry, we can't trust. If we trust, we can't worry. Worry is actually saying "My problem is too big for God."

The cure for worry is found in Matthew 6 where Jesus attacks it point by point. 1. Be more concerned about spiritual things than earthly cares (v. 19-21). Things of this world are only temporary, only eternal things will last. Jim Elliot once said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." 2. We can only live life correctly if we put eternal things before earthly things (v. 22-23). 3. Put God before material things (v. 24). When we become so preoccupied with material comfort and security we can't be loyal servants of God. 4. Don't worry (v. 25) - that's a command, not a suggestion! 5. Reason #1 to not worry: God will provide all our needs (v. 26-31). He doesn't always provide our wants, but He promises to provide our needs, as He does the birds and flowers. 6. Reason #2: worry doesn't do any good (v. 27). Worry is letting a creative imagination picture the worst, assume it will happen, and assume God won't be there to help. 7. Reason #3: God knows our needs and will provide them. When has He failed you in the past? He won't in the present or future, either. 8. Make serving God your number 1 priority (v. 33). Don't focus on getting God to serve you, you serve Him! 9. Live life one day at a time. God will provide for tomorrow's needs when tomorrow comes (Lev. 19:17-18; II Cor. 4:16; 12:9; Dt. 33:25). While we avoid larger sins, we often let something seemingly small as worry in our lives. It is sin and separates us from God's power as

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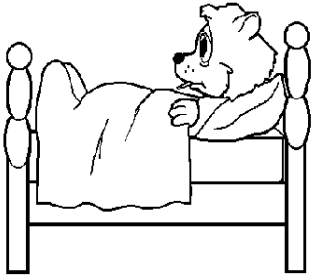
quickly as any 'big' sin. Watch out for it.

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *DEPRESSION*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Why are you downcast (depressed), O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? ... My soul is downcast (depressed) within me. (Psalm 42:5-6) Depression is universal. It is as old as mankind itself. It hits everyone. No one is immune. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, speaks of Job in depression (Job 7:3-11). Moses got depressed (Num. 11:11-15), so did Jonah (4:3) and Jeremiah (15:10-18). Depression affects all areas of life and being. At its root, depression is self pity. We feel sorry for ourselves, thinking things are too hard and God isn't fair to us. It is a self-imposed pity party! Elijah is a perfect example:

Elijah was a tremendous man of faith and power. More miracles are associated with his ministry than anyone else in the Old Testament. God ended a long, terrible drought when the people turned back to Him after Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18). Elijah responded by running away and asking God to take his life. Why? What caused this? I Kings 19 is an interesting account of depression: its time, trigger, tortures and treatment.



The **TIME** of Elijah's depression is quite surprising (v. 2-4). He wasn't depressed when fed by a raven or widow, nor when facing Ahab or the prophets of Baal. It wasn't until after it was over, when he experienced an emotional let-down, that he got depressed. Always watch, after every high point in life the only direction is down. If we go by our emotions we'll let our feelings control, as did Elijah.

What **TRIGGERED** his depression was a single threat of a defeated woman. Queen Jezebel said she'd kill him for what happened. She was powerless, everyone had turned back to God. There was no reason for him to get depressed. The immediate cause of depression seldom is valid. It's just the timing of it more than anything else.

Elijah's **TORTURES** were the same as ours (v. 4). He ran away from his friends and responsibilities, he was disgusted with life and prayed for death, he felt all alone, as if no one cared about him.

The most important part, though, is God's **TREATMENT** for Elijah. Physically Elijah had to eat and sleep (v. 5-7). Our physical being must be healthy in order to overcome depression. Take care of your health! Psychologically God let Elijah talk, get it off his chest (v. 9-10), and God just quietly listened. Spiritual God revealed Himself to Elijah in a still, small voice (v. 11-15), not in a powerful, supernatural way as Elijah wanted. Then God gave Elijah work to do (when depressed stay faithful to your responsibilities) and explained that Elijah wasn't alone. Knowing we aren't alone is very important.

Still, there was always a **TRACE** left, for victory over depression is never permanent. It can always come back. Final **TRIUMPH** comes only by faith in God and His Word (Rom. 8:28; James 1:2-3; I Cor. 10:13; I Thes.

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5:18). Read and memorize this to help. Remember Elijah and learn from him about how to avoid and defeat depression.

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *PERFECTIONISM*

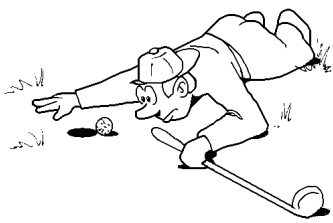
By Jerry Schmoyer

Lucy: "When I grow up I want to be a nurse."

Charlie Brown: "That's fine."

Lucy: "What do you want to be when you grow up, Charlie Brown?"

Charlie Brown: "Perfect!"



We smile at that because we can identify with that. We, too, are perfectionists. If you get distracted following a car with a turn signal on but doesn't turn you are a perfectionist. If you correct misspelled words in your church bulletin on Sunday you are a perfectionist. If it bothers you to have the yoke of your fried egg way off center or broken you are a perfectionist. Several elements today tend to contribute to our perfectionism. We live in a culture where competition rules. From little on we have to look just right, have perfect school work, get top grades in school, and really 'reach our potential.' Then we become Christians and the Bible tells us to be sinless and perfect. This is especially hard on introverts, but affects everyone. The tough thing is that the harder we try to be perfect, the more imperfect we become! Nobody likes to be a perfectionist. It is a compulsion that brings bondage. There is never any joy or peace in it. Others keep away from perfectionists, people don't like having them around.

Perfectionism is a sin, it is not striving after godliness. It comes from insecurity, from feeling we have to be perfect before we or anyone else can love and accept ourselves. It takes maturity to realize we aren't nor will be ever be perfect (I John 1:8-10). It takes balance to know our strengths and weaknesses.

Paul faced this same drive to be perfect. He writes about it in Philippians 3:10-14. He kept the whole law and lived as good a life as anyone could (Gal. 1:14). What he learned about overcoming perfectionism he summed up in v. 13 - forgetting past failures while continuing to strive to do our best. Paul learned to accept his weaknesses as well as his strengths as God-given. Affirm your worth in God, find security in God's love, not in meeting the standards of self, others or parents. Adapt your expectations to fit life's realities. Advance, even in the face of discouragement. Adore Christ, in whom you find full acceptance. Focus your thoughts on Him, not yourself.

By the way, when the Bible says we are to be 'perfect,' the best translation of that word would be 'mature, stable.' Being a perfectionist actually moves us in the opposite direction of that.

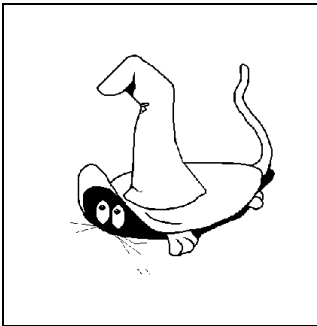
If you struggle with perfectionism ask God to give you His peace. Try to understand what has made you that way. Find your self-worth and acceptance in a balanced view of yourself as well as in the acceptance of others. Break down those prison walls of perfectionism and be free. With Jesus; help it can be done!

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *INFERIORITY COMPLEX*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Recent studies have shown that as many as 90% of all people have feelings of inadequacy. It's something we all struggle with. However, some have allowed these feelings to become so strong that they control the person. That is when it becomes an inferiority complex. A person with an inferiority complex often has his feelings of inferiority so repressed that he doesn't even recognize them anymore. He is so convinced he IS inferior he takes it for granted. It is rooted in a terrible self image. It results in habitually feeling inferior to everyone, feeling helpless and fearful, and shrinking from people, responsibility, challenges or decisions. Having feelings of inferiority which we are aware of at certain times is more normal and natural, and easier to deal with. The cause of all of this usually starts in childhood: overprotection, rejection by parents, adults or other children, too high expectations, or being dominated by parents.



It's impossible to live a normal, healthy life with an inferiority complex. Thus people find ways of compensating. Some become overassertive and overaggressive, others go to the opposite extreme and become oversensitive, touchy and very withdrawn. Sometimes people compensate by throwing themselves into something they can succeed at, or escaping to a fantasy land in their minds. None of these are good cures, only ways of masking the symptoms for awhile.

The only cure is found in Jesus. Accept His unconditional love, that He created you the way He wants you to be (Psalm 139) and doesn't expect as much from you as you expect from yourself (Psalm 103). God has a plan and purpose for each of us (II Cor. 17:17; Eph. 1:11; Phil. 2:13; Ps. 32:8; 37:5; I Pt. 2:9; II Tim. 1:9). It is usually necessary for a person with an inferiority complex to talk it over with someone who is able to help draw out the problem and present a solution (a pastor, Christian counselor, mature Christian friend, etc.). In order to reach out and take this risk the person must be motivated to want to change. That means stopping feeling they deserve the misery they put themselves through. As long as that feeling persists there will be no lasting change. Then they must realize that there is a way out of the bondage and misery their inferiority complex brings (I Cor. 10:13). It is found in Jesus. It takes faith in Jesus to bring one through this, believing He really does love you and care. Often this has to be modeled first by another human being who shows unconditional love and acceptance. There again is the risk of taking a chance and opening one's self up, fearing the potential for rejection.

Please take the first step by reaching out to someone. Ask someone to pray for you about this as a very first step, then take it from there. Please feel free to contact me if there is any way I can help (215-348-8086). I'll gladly do what I can. Remember that God is greater than anything, and all things work together for your good when you love Him and put Him first (Rom. 8:28). Don't quit, don't give in -- that's just what the enemy wants!

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *CRITICAL ATTITUDE*

By Jerry Schmoyer

There's a fine line between having a critical attitude and just being discerning, isn't there? You can only tell by knowing the person's motive which is which. How can we know if we are being sinfully critical and judgmental, or just being discerning and evaluating? Even the Bible says to judge (Mt. 18:15-18; 7:16; I Cor. 5:12-13; Jn. 7:24; Lk. 12:57) and not to judge (Rom. 14:3-13; I Cor. 4:5; Mt. 7:1; Rom. 2:1). The same Jesus who said not to judge then judged the religious rulers (Mt. 5:20; 6:2, 5, 16; 15:1ff; 23:1ff). Just what kind of judging is all right? What is of God and what is of the flesh? When is it alertness and when is it a critical attitude?



There is a big difference between passing judgment by evaluating another's actions and motives and discriminating (investigating to find the truth). When we are critical and judgmental we don't withhold opinions until we have all the facts (as of Eli judging Hannah, I Sam. 1:13; David to Nathan, II Sam. 12:1-7)), we are too quick to share our opinions with others, and we don't differentiate between the sin and the sinner but end up condemning both. Often an underlying factor is that we feel that if someone else looks bad that will make us look better -- a see-saw effect. Our pride seeks to make us look better by making others look worse.

While looking for things to criticize in others is sinful and often comes from insecurity and a poor self image in ourselves, evaluation/discerning is something important to do. The capacity for forming an opinion is one of the most valuable faculties and the right use of it is one of our most important duties. The Bible commands us to use our mind to separate from deceitful sin and anything counterfeit.

Another important factor to consider here is our standard of judgment. Often we have different standards for ourselves than for others. For us saying something wrong is an accidental slip, for others it is purposeful sin. When we overlook someone we are busy and distracted, but when someone overlooks us they are rude and stuck-up. For others it is gossip, for us it is simply telling the truth as it is. Remember the standard you hold others to is the standard God will hold you to (I Cor. 11:31-32; Mt. 7:1-2; 6:12; Rom. 2:1-2). The Golden Rule certainly applies here (Mt. 7:12). Therefore use the same standard on others that you want others and God to use on you. Treat others as you want them and God to treat you. Since we can't tell other's motives we must give them the benefit of the doubt, as we want to have. Actually, being critical of others is often a worse sin than what it is in them that we criticize (James 2:4). Love is to be our main characteristic (it produces grace & mercy) if we are to be Christ-like (I Cor. 13).

Then how can we know when to say something to another? If it is painful to criticize someone you are safe doing it, IF God wants you to. But do it in love! If you take the slightest pleasure in it don't do it. Decide never to reprove another person unless it helps show you failures in your life, too (Mt. 7:3; Jn. 8:7), and helps you live closer to God. Even if others are wrong, forgiveness is still important (Dt. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; Jn. 13:12-15; Eph. 4:32; 5:1-2; Col. 3:13). Remember, it's much easier to destroy a building, or a reputation than to build one. It takes no skill or talent to knock down a fine building, nor to ruin a person's reputation. And when others unfairly criticize you, that is no license to criticize them back. In all things we are to be Christ-like. That means to act, talk and respond as He would.

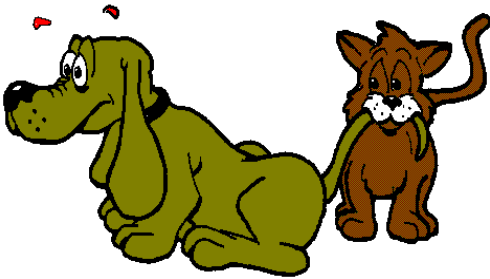
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He is our perfect example. think what He would do and then, with His help, do it.

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *UNFORGIVENESS*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Suppose family members you loved cruelly mistreated you and ruined your family, separating you from your loved ones for 20 years. Suppose that during that 20 years as you tried to serve God things went from bad to worse. You were accused of something you didn't do and imprisoned for it. People you helped said they'd help you in return forgot about you. Then all of a sudden you were face to face with the very people who started and caused all this misery in your life. How would you feel? How would you treat them? Would you forgive them? This is the situation Joseph in the Old Testament found himself in, and with God's grace he could forgive them (Gen. 45:4-8). He realized God was in control of everything and had a plan and purpose for it all. All things do work together (Romans 8:28).



Forgiveness is hard, because when someone hurts us our natural tendency is to hurt them back. In our pride we don't want to let them off the hook. We somehow feel that by withholding our forgiveness we are making them suffer for what they did. In actuality we don't hurt them, just ourselves. The Bible clearly says that unforgiveness is like opening a door in our hearts that allows Satan's demons access (Eph. 4:26-27; II Cor. 2:10-11; Mt. 18:34). Satan whispers his lies into our minds: "They don't deserve to be forgiven!" (of course not, who does?), "It's not fair for you to let them off free." "If you forgive them they'll just do it again." "They hurt me too much for me to forgive." These are all Satan's lies! God commands us to forgive no matter how bad or how often (Mt. 18:15-35).

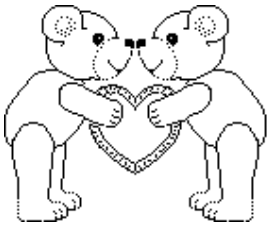
What does it mean to forgive? It doesn't mean pretending it never happened, forgetting about it, ignoring the hurt, or explaining it away. Forgiving means absorbing the cost yourself, giving up any right you might feel to see the other person suffer. When a husband is unfaithful and his wife forgives him she is saying she is giving up any right she has to see him suffer for what he's done but that she'll carry the hurt and pain herself, not make him 'pay' for it. Isn't this just what Jesus did on the cross, paying for our sins? He absorbed the price Himself and never passes it onto us. He bore the cost Himself. When we forgive someone we say that we, with God's help, will absorb the hurt and not try to handle it by passing the hurt back to the offender by revenge, anger or withholding forgiveness. This is what it means to be Christ-like. How we 'feel' about it doesn't matter, this is a decision of the will. You make a free will choice to absorb the cost yourself, live with the consequences, allow them to go free. It's what God does when He forgives us. Now if the person knows you haven't forgiven them you must also tell them so. Remember, too, that God says that if we don't forgive others He won't forgive us (Mt. 6:12-15). Forgiving isn't an option, it's a command. God commands us to do it for our own good. Pray and ask God to bring to mind anyone you haven't forgiven (Mt. 18:35). Then forgive them, with God's help!

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *LONELINESS*

By Jerry Schmoyer

When Janis Joplin committed suicide at the age of 27, it was just after she had told a friend, "When I am not on the theater stage I just lie around, watch television, and feel very lonely." Loneliness can be pure torture, real misery. God never intended man to be lonely, that's why He created a companion (Gen. 2:18). His plan was not that man be lonely (Ps. 68:5-6). First of all we must understand that there is a big difference between being alone and being lonely. You can be alone and not lonely, or not alone but still lonely. Being alone is a physical state, being lonely is an internal attitude. Since sin entered and separated man from God, there will always be a bit of loneliness in man for there is a part of man that only God can meet, and then not completely until we are in heaven with Him. Still, loneliness doesn't have to be something that so defeats us today. What causes it? How can we handle it?



Rejection is a leading cause of loneliness. Somewhere we feel rejected. If there is anyone who knows and understands what rejection is like it is Jesus! He was rejected by family and peers (Isa. 53:2-3; Mt. 2:23). His rejection was much worse than ours for even God in heaven rejected Him (Isa. 53:4,10). However God used His rejection to secure our acceptance (Isa. 53:4-6, 11). Because God accepts us we never are alone (Heb. 13:15) even though we may feel lonely. Remember, don't go by your feelings. Ask God to change your feelings to match reality, don't try to change reality to match your feelings.

Other causes for feeling lonely are separation (moving, death, divorce, etc.), non-intimacy (not being married, or married without intimacy), and sin (separates man from man and God). If unchecked loneliness leads to hopelessness and often to suicide. That is Satan's plan - end our lives prematurely. Before, though, we often use many ungodly substitutes to fight the loneliness: drugs, alcohol, food, sex, career, money and possessions, etc. What, then, is the proper cure for loneliness? How can we handle it?

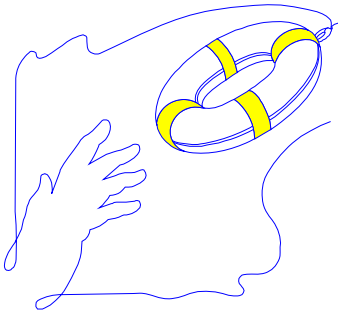
First of all, reestablish your relationship with God. Confess any sins in your life. Make sure you are totally committed to Him to be His servant whatever He requires for you. Make sure you are serving Him, not trying to get Him to serve you! Next, reestablish your relationship with people. Evaluate your priorities and personality. Be willing to take risks and build bridges. Identify and remove any guilt or inferiority feelings. Then identify any bitterness that makes you withdrawn and aloof. Forgive any who have hurt you and let God heal you. Confess your bitterness and unforgiveness as sin. Reject any self pity, don't be self-centered, thinking always of your hurts and problems. Another step is to get involved with others. Don't withdraw, don't feed your loneliness, do take risks to open yourself up to others. Make friends by seeking out people who are able to help and befriend you. Finally, focus on God's promises. Remember only God can ultimately meet your loneliness. He may do it through another human being or directly, or help you handle it inside, but only He can help. He will help if you turn to Him, but you must turn to Him to have your needs met.

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR STRESS

By Jerry Schmoyer

Did you know that the three best-selling drugs in this country are an ulcer medication, a hypertension drug, and a tranquilizer (which is number 1)? That's because stress is such a big problem today. *Time* magazine called it a national epidemic. "Two-thirds of all office visits to family doctors are prompted by stress-related symptoms." Stress has become such a part of life we often don't even realize we have it. Do you eat or talk too rapidly? Do you rush people to hurry up and way what they are going to say? Do you think of your problem, even when talking to someone about theirs? Do you feel guilty when you sit down to rest? Do you try and pack more and more activities into less and less time? Are you easily irritated by little things? Do you lash out at people whom you love? Do you feel a separation from people and God? Do you have nagging physical ailments (colds, indigestion, diarrhea, viruses headaches, tiredness, etc.)? These are all signs of stress.



Stress is nothing new. Paul faced stress. He said he was "hard pressed/afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down" (II Cor. 4:7-9). He went through all kinds of physical, social and emotional suffering, yet calls it all "light and momentary troubles" (II Cor. 4:17). How can he call it that? He trusts God knows what He is doing! He doesn't second-guess

God, but trusts God will help him through anything and everything. Stress that comes from lack of faith (worry, fear, etc.) or us trying to do more than God wants must be confessed as sin, but stress from the responsibilities and pressures of daily life must be taken to God.

While suffering unjustly in prison Paul wrote several New Testament books, Philippians among them. Still, the theme is joy (16 times in the short book). Philippians 4 is a good antidote to stress. Paul says stress is handled by having a proper perspective to God. Praise Him no matter what (v. 8). Focus on God's greatness, not your circumstances. If your God is big, your problems will be small. But if you God is small, your problems will be big. You cannot have a big God and big problems at the same time. You have either one or the other. To combat stress you must focus on the greatness of God, not the greatness of your problems. Secondly, to handle stress you must have a proper perspective to self (v. 13). You must have a good self-image, a balanced evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses. Thirdly, a proper perspective to Life (v. 6), giving thanks to God no matter what. That means use the glance-gaze method. Glance at the problem, then gaze at Jesus. Doing the opposite brings stress. Fourth, a proper perspective to problems (v. 4), rejoicing in God no matter what (James 1:2-4). That doesn't mean we are to enjoy misery, but realize despite it God loves us and has a plan and purpose for it all. Fifth, you need a proper perspective to people (v. 1-2), seeing them not as obstacles or roadblocks, but as opportunities to minister, to edify and help them. Finally, you need a proper perspective to time (3:12, 14). That's how Paul knew what he was going through was a "light and momentary trouble" (II Cor. 4:17). Life is so short and temporary. Keep things in an eternal perspective. What will matter most 20 years from now? What will matter most 100 years from now? Let that set your priorities and determine what you try to accomplish in life. Focus on eternal and lasting things, not temporal and temporary things. You can't do it all, so do what matters most! Don't expect to do it all -- that is a leading cause of stress. Do what you can with the resources you have and leave the rest to God. After all, HE is God, not you!

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *INSECURITY*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Suppose someone would come up to you and say, "We're going to have a party but we're not going to invite you!" What would your response be? Would you say, "That's a good idea! I think you're doing the right thing. If I have the type of personality that annoys you, it would be silly to invite me. I hope you have a nice time!" Then just walk away with a smile on your face and peace in your heart. Could you do that? Can anyone do that? That would take real maturity. The problem is that most of us are too insecure to handle rejection that way. What we usually do is feel hurt and rejection, fight the temptation to hurt back, and put up walls of indifference and unconcern.



Everyone needs to feel secure. God designed us to grow up in a family where we were unconditionally loved and accepted for who we were, strengths and weaknesses both. That rarely happens, so we become insecure. Ever since Adam and Eve left Eden and God's presence man has and will be insecure. Man does almost anything to find and have security. We use money, possessions, insurance, career prestige, job advancement, personal achievements, even religion, to somehow find a substitute security. These won't bring real security, though.

Each one needs to have security in three areas of life: with God, with self, and with another human being. We only find security with God through salvation, not through anything we can do to impress or earn His love (Eph. 2:8-9). That is the only place we can have total, unconditional security. How unfortunate (not to mention unbiblical) it is when some try to take that away and say we can lose our salvation (or maybe we never had it to begin with). The second area of security is security with self. Since we live without selves 24 hours a day we must be comfortable being with ourselves. We must have a proper self image, accepting our strengths and weaknesses as God-given. Finally we must have security with another human being, someone who will love and accept us no matter how we look or act, no matter how sick or miserable we are. Every emotional problem comes from insecurity in one of these areas. Often these are overlapped. We need to find security with another human being before we can transfer that trust to God. Then we have a firmer basis to reach out to others as well as accepting ourselves. It all takes risk, breaking down walls, allowing others to get close to us.

Colossians 1:19-23 is a good passage to help with insecurity. We are secure in God's love (v. 19) because He proved it to us on the cross, loving us so much He left heaven to take all our sins in His body before we could do anything to earn or deserve that love. God forgives us unconditionally every time we ask for it (v. 20). We never have to doubt our security in Him (v. 22). This is our confidence assurance ("hope" - v. 23). There is no insecurity for those in Christ, and there is no security to be found apart from Him. Accept Him as your Savior and Lord. Allow Him to love you. Rely on Him for every need. Find your security in His acceptance, not in the acceptance of others. Then you won't be so controlled by what others say or do. Try it - you'll like it!

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR SORROW

By Jerry Schmoyer

We all face sorrow. As a pastor I get involved in the sorrows of others as well as my own. No one is exempt. Even Jesus Himself was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3). By looking at how Jesus handled sorrow we can get a good idea about how to handle it in our own lives. How did Jesus respond when His cousin and forerunner, John, was brutally murdered?



The first things Jesus did was to spend A FEW MOMENTS ALONE (Mt. 14:12-13). There are private thoughts and feelings that must be processed and allowed to flow. There is the necessity of prayer. There is a need to pour out our souls to God. Staying alone isn't good, but starting out with a little time alone is important.

Despite the pain and loss, it is important to RESUME NORMAL ACTIVITIES as soon as possible. Jesus returned from His time alone to feed the 5,000, then walk on the water. Its natural to want to do things for someone in sorrow, but the sooner they get involved in regular responsibility instead of having more time to sit and think the better. Normal activities force you to make decisions and orient yourself to life. After a loss readjustments must be made, but life must go on.

Jesus knew to ACCEPT SORROW AS A PHASE OF TRANSITION (Mt. 9:14; Jn. 16:20-21). There is a time to mourn and a time to be glad (Eccl. 3:4). When sorrow comes it seems it will never leave, but we must realize that it will be gone. It takes time, time is the great healer for sorrow.

While being alone at the start helps, soon it is important to SHARE YOUR GRIEF WITH OTHERS. Jesus did this in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:37-38). Just having someone to sit quietly and listen, or just be with you if you don't want to talk, is very, very important.

It is important to ACCEPT TRAGEDY AS THE WILL OF GOD as Jesus did (Mt. 26:24). Don't continually ask yourself "Why?" or wonder "what if..." Don't feel guilty or responsible. God is in control of all and has a reason even if we don't understand it (Rom 8:28).

Notice also that Jesus bore no bitterness. When sorrow hits, LAY ASIDE RESENTMENT. Forgive anyone you feel any resentment towards, as Jesus did (Lk. 23:34).

Finally, remember that SORROW IS TEMPORARY. To help them through their sorrow, Jesus tried to get the disciple's eyes on the future with Him (Jn. 14:1ff). We must keep our eyes on heaven, when there will be no more sorrow! Then Jesus will turn our sorrow into joy (Mt. 5:4).

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *JEALOUSY*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Haman was jealous of Mordecai (Est. 5:13). Joseph's brothers were jealous of him (Gen. 37:4). Saul was jealous of David (I Sam. 18:8). the elder brother was jealous of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:28). Cain was jealous of Able (Gen. 4:5). Jealousy is common today as well as in the Bible (Mt. 20:12; 27:18; Judg. 8:1; Gen. 26:14; 37:11; Num. 16:3; Ps. 73:3; Dan. 6:4; Acts 13:45).



God forbids jealousy (Ps. 37:1; Prov. 3:31; 23:17; I Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:26), yet God Himself is often jealous (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Dt. 4:24; 29:20; Jos. 24:19; I Ki. 14:22; I Cor. 10:22). You see, jealousy is one of those emotions like anger, fear and guilt that God created for a good reason but man misuses for sin. It is to motivate us to positive action. When a husband finds someone trying to steal his wife from him his reaction should be one of jealousy. That's how God felt about Satan trying to steal His chosen people. That's why God as being 'jealous' and 'zealous' go hand in hand. Jealousy motivates one to be zealous for that cause. However when it is from a lack of contentment, envy, greed, or insecurity it is sinful. God's Spirit will reveal to your spirit just what kind of jealousy you have if you ask Him and listen to his answer.

A pattern of jealousy often starts in childhood. A new baby, excessive competition or parental favoritism can bring on jealousy. Often it starts as jealousy that isn't sinful, but as it grows it becomes sinful. In adulthood jealousy is caused by insecurity, feeling inadequate, rejected or criticized, or disappointment. It springs from our sin nature (Mk. 7:21-23; Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 3:3). Satan can also feed into a person's jealousy and magnify it, using it to control and defeat a person. People get jealous of other's possessions, privileges, positions and personalities/appearances.

How to cure jealousy? First, you must admit it and pride makes that hard. Confess it as sin. Then you must understand the forces in life cause feelings of inadequacy. Let your mind explain reality to your emotions. Make a free-will choice to put off the old and put on the new (Col. 3:9-10). Honestly admit to yourself what you get jealous of and why. Ask God to heal you of this and fill you with His peace and meaning. Remember, don't love the world or the things in the world -- and that is usually what we are jealous of (I Jn. 2:15-17). Seek God's approval, not the world's recognition, accomplishment or pleasures. Accept your own weaknesses and limits. Don't have unrealistic expectations of yourself.

Remember, having victory over emotions like these is a process. Even Paul had to 'learn' to be content (Phil. 4:11-13). Make sure you are making progress in that direction, though! With God's help you can do it!

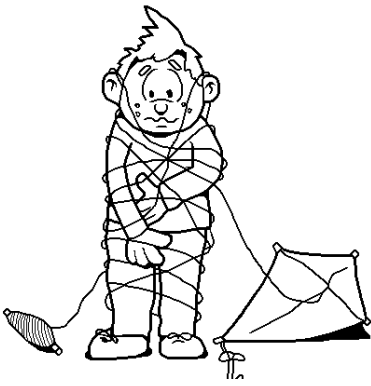
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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *HOPELESSNESS*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Feeling hopeless is one of the most awful feelings a person can have. When there is no hope there is nothing. God is hope, without God there is no hope. Satan uses hopelessness to defeat and destroy all he can. What causes hopelessness? It's not the size of our problems for some with the greatest burdens have complete faith and trust in God. If it's not our circumstances that cause hopelessness, it must be how we face our circumstances.

Hopelessness is seeing the present and the future as unmanageable, uncontrollable, and with no end in sight. That means the person either rejects God and the promises of His Word entirely, or has such a distorted view of God and the Bible that they don't see God's love, mercy, grace, forgiveness and sovereignty. When we look only at the smallness of own resources and abilities and the greatness of our difficulties and obstacles, there is certainly reason to feel hopeless. However we can't go by our feelings. If we feel it or not, the fact doesn't change that God is still in sovereign control of everything and all is done based on His love for us (Romans 8). Hopelessness can be made worse or even brought on by fatigue (Elijah), unresolved sin and guilt (Ps. 66:18), and feelings of unworthiness, insecurity and fear.



The cure is to let your mind tell your emotions that God is still on the throne! Focus on the Bible promises, not your own feelings (II Tim. 3:15; Heb. 4:12). Confess any guilt, insecurity or poor self image you may have. Further counseling may be needed to accomplish this. Remember, no one is worthy of God's love, or needs to be (Mt. 11:28-30). It is freely given to all. Keep your eyes on Jesus, He is the object of our hope (Ps. 31:24; 33:18; 39:7; 42:11; 71:5; 146:5; Jer. 17:7; Joel 3:16). Don't keep your eyes on your limited resources or ability, nor on the greatness of the problem.

Hope is necessary for living a godly life (I Cor. 13:13). When the Bible uses the word 'hope' it doesn't mean 'wish' but 'confident assurance.' Putting our hope in God means putting our confident assurance in Him, not a wish. This hope enabled Abraham to become the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:18; 5:5). The Bible is the source of hope (Rom. 15:4). We are to share our hope with others (I Pt. 3:15). Hope inspires us to live a clean, holy life (I Jn. 3:3).

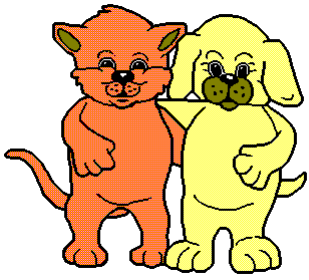
If we stay in hopelessness we become weary of life (Gen. 27:46; Job 3:20; Eccl. 2:17; 4:1-2; Jn. 4:8). This despair leads men to death (Num. 11:15; I Ki., 19:4; Jn. 3:21; 7:15; Jer. 8:3; Jn. 4:3; Rev. 9:6). Before long death looks attractive, the only way out! Thus Satan's plan for hopelessness is to bring premature death by suicide (I Sam. 31:4; II Sam. 17:23; I Ki. 16:18; Mt. 27:5; Acts 1:18). Of course suicide is no cure, only Jesus is. If you, or someone you know, is feeling hopeless -- turn to Jesus. The hope He gives lasts forever (I Cor. 13:13).

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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *BROKEN* *RELATIONSHIPS*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Is there a relationship in your life that isn't as close as it once was? Perhaps there's some one that you need to make up with but don't quite know where to start. Just how are we to heal broken relationships? God's Word gives us the answer.



1. **CONFESS IT TO GOD.** The prodigal son and David both recognized their broken relationship sins as being against God. Confess your part as sin (I Jn. 1:9).

2. **FORGIVE THE PERSON.** Even if they don't apologize, we are to forgive (Mt. 6:12-15; 5:22, 38-39, Rom 12:19; I Pt. 3:9; etc.). Jesus is our example in forgiveness (Eph. 4:32). Give up any right you feel you have to hurt them back for their hurt to you. Take that hurt to God instead, asking Him to heal you of it. Remember, if we don't forgive others God won't forgive us (Mt. 6:12-15; 7:1-5, 12; Lk. 6:31; Rom. 2:1).

3. **MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.** Even if you are totally innocent and have nothing against another, if they have something against you the Bible says you are to go to them before you can worship God (Mt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17). Make it quickly, too. Don't put it off. If you can't go in person, call or write a letter, then see them in person as soon as possible (Mt 18:15), unless they live a great distance away. Never send the message with another person.

4. **GO IN GENUINE LOVE.** Pray for God to fill your heart with love for them (Eph. 4:32; Mt. 5:44; 18:15-35). God says if we don't love others we can't really love Him (I Jn. 2:9-11; 3:14-15; 4:7-11, 20-21; Lk. 17:3-4). God doesn't say we have to like (fleshly appeal, approval of their values and actions) but we do have to love (unconditionally wanting what is best for them) everyone.

5. **DROP THE MATTER.** Don't bring it up to anyone ever, don't allow it in your mind. Ask God to remove it whenever it comes to mind. Keep doing this for as long as necessary (Mt. 18:21-35; Lk. 17:3-4).

It is our pride that makes this so hard. We expect others to come to us, apologizing and begging our forgiveness. Then we will be great enough to forgive. That's not how God forgives us, nor how we are to forgive others. He reached out to us by coming to earth and then the cross -- before we made any move to Him. He wants us to do the same, for in that way we become more like Him. It really hurts me to see my children not getting along with each other, and I'm sure it hurts our heavenly Father when His children don't get along, either!

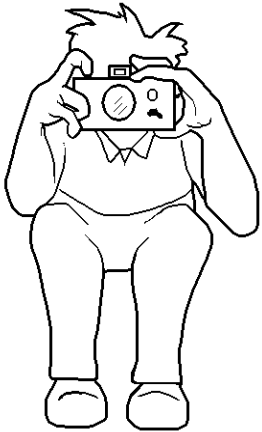
EMOTIONS
How To Handle Your
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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *EMOTIONAL MATURITY*

By Jerry Schmoyer

Are you mature emotionally? That's quite a question, isn't it? We know when we mature physically, but what about emotionally? There are no obvious signs like with our bodies, or are there?

Emotional maturity is important, for a person can't be any more mature spiritually than they are emotionally. The two go hand in hand. Emotional maturity is a life-long process, not something we can attain, but there are some things to look for that show where we are in the process.



One is to **ACCEPT YOUR EMOTIONS AS FROM GOD**. A mature person controls his emotions instead of letting them control him. He doesn't go to the opposite extreme and stuff them away, either. He understands himself and lets his mind explain reality to his emotions. He knows emotions are to enrich us, not control us. He doesn't make decisions based on his emotions. He realizes God heals our emotions by working inside us, not by changing our circumstances.

An emotionally mature person knows how to **DISPOSE OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**. He accepts it as a real emotion, doesn't repress or express it. He confesses the sin involved, then replaces it with God's positive counterbalance by prayer. Worry is replaced with trust, anger with love, fear with faith, pride with humility, etc. If unable to have victory on his own, a mature person goes to another mature person for counsel and prayer.

An important part of emotional maturity is separating what we **DO** from who we **ARE**. It is what we are that counts, in understanding yourself and others. We must have a realistic view of ourselves and others: not too high and not too low. We need long-range goals not what of what we do but more important of what we are to become as Christians and people.

What steps can a person take to grow emotionally? First, the past must be forgiven by God, and we must be cleansed from its influence. If not it will be like a rubber band constantly pulling us back to it. Second, we must be convinced that emotional hurts and immaturities can only be dealt with at the cross. No change in environment or circumstances without can bring change within. Don't treat symptoms, get to the real inner problem. We must develop a wholesome self-image, seeing ourselves as God sees us and accepting ourselves as God accepts us. Part of the way this happens is by taking risks and being open to fellow Christians. As we experience their acceptance we will be better able to accept ourselves and God's, too. Remember, joy is a byproduct of obedience. Obey God no matter what your feelings say!

The art of living a self-controlled life consists in knowing which impulses to obey and which must be made to obey. Remember, maturity is a process, one we never complete in this lifetime. However, we are to be moving in that direction slowly but surely. That makes us more like Jesus, and that is our goal in life -- to be Christ-like. Who better is there to help us in that process than Jesus Himself, who will fill us with His Spirit and help conform us to His image if we let Him. The process may be painful at times, but keep your eyes on the product, not the process. You can't have the product without the process!

EMOTIONS
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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR *COUNSELING*

By Jerry Schmoyer

If you've been growing as a Christian and gaining some wisdom about how God would have you live, and if you are sensitive to other's hurts and know how to listen, you'll have people coming to you quite often for advice. I do a lot of counseling, and would like to share some do's and don't's with you. These are important, so please read them carefully and apply them to your own life.



Never counsel the opposite sex alone, ride in a car with the opposite sex alone, etc. No matter what the emergency or inconvenience, never, never, never, never, under any circumstance do it! Even when counseling some one of the opposite sex when not alone, be very careful of physical contact, even touching. Hugging and touching are important but must be done by same-sex people. Too many people are vulnerable and needy to love and acceptance of the opposite sex. Emotional adultery is as bad as physical adultery, and touch is a great way to start it! Always make sure you are in control of all emotions in counseling, yours and the other persons. If either one gets out of hand nothing positive can take place.

Remember, you have to let your mind explain reality to your emotions, not the other way around!

Watch out for pride. Satan uses that big time when you help others. Your focus gets off them and God and onto yourself. Pride is a top tool of Satan's and has caused the downfall of people much more mature and spiritual than you and me.

If you sense you will be talking with a person regularly, document what took place after each conversation so you can hold the person accountable and remember what advice you gave. Also, don't hesitate to refer to others. Pride tells us we can do it all, but we can't.

Keep someone else informed about who you are counseling with and how it is going. Women should keep their husbands informed. Men should keep a church leader informed. This is good prayer support, balance, and accountability.

When counseling remember the main thing people want is a listening ear. Most don't expect you to have an answer, and will resent it if you give a quick, simple solution ('trust God more,' 'pray about it,' 'don't let it bother you,' etc.). I don't like those answers and neither do you. When giving advice, do what is best for the person in the long-run, no matter what they may think of you at the moment. This is not a popularity contest. If it is you are just using people for your own ego. Tough love demands doing what is best, as God does for us. Don't always bail people out, let them learn the hard way and be responsible for their own actions. Don't let them manipulate you, or you won't be helping them at all. Hold them accountable. Make them write down suggestions, memorize Bible verses, follow through on advice, etc. Be sensitive to what God's Spirit is leading you to say and do, then faithfully follow that impulse and do it, no matter what it is.

Make sure you are a good steward of your time. You wouldn't let people dominate and waste your money, don't let them do that with your time, either. Never hesitate to say 'no' when your priorities are threatened. God is big enough to take care of people when we can't. Being manipulated by guilt doesn't help their problem, it just creates another one in us.

Remember, your whole purpose is to wean someone off you. If they are becoming more dependent on you instead of less, it's time to drop the whole thing for both your sakes. If I can help you with anything that comes up please don't hesitate to call (215-348-8086). I'll gladly do what I can. Let God use you, but do it prayerfully!

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