



COVENANT CHURCH

Déjà Vu – Breaking the Cycle

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Main Idea – Each of us experiences both healthy and unhealthy patterns in our lives. The first step in breaking an unhealthy pattern is to be aware of it. It is important to consciously recognize who you say you are, who others say you are, and who God says you are.

Life's patterns

- Your life consists of various rhythms and cycles. You have good times and bad times, times of happiness and times of sorrow. (See Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.)
- Both healthy and unhealthy habits can be developed during those cycles.
- Perhaps, in some of your cycles, you have developed habits and ways of thinking you don't like.
- It is possible to recreate new healthy patterns.
- Three steps in that process are awareness, vision, and new habits.

Hearing something new

- When Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5-7** he was teaching the people new insights about life.
- One statement Jesus made was, **Matthew 5:29** – “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.” (NKJV)
- In real words, what Jesus was saying was that if there is something in your life that is causing you to do wrong things, get rid of that thing.

Focus on yourself first

- If you have developed bad habits or patterns in life, it is important to focus first on your own shortcomings. Do not – in the initial stage – attempt to evaluate other people.
- **Matthew 7:3-5** – “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” (NIV)
- **Matthew 7:1-5** – “Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults –

unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor." (Message)

- Psychologist Tasha Eurich said that self-awareness actually brings you power. Truthfully knowing about yourself – even acknowledging your weaknesses – has its own type of comfort.
- "Awareness is the ability to see ourselves clearly, to understand who we are, how others see us and how we fit into the world. Self-awareness gives us power. We might not always like what we see, but there's comfort in knowing ourselves." Tasha Eurich

Internal Self Awareness

- Internal self-awareness is the identification of your internal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and how they impact your interaction with the outside world.
- Internal self-awareness is "who you say you are."
- How do you talk to yourself about you? Things you say about yourself, to yourself, is important.
- **Proverbs 23:7a – For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.**

External Self Awareness

- External self-awareness is understanding how others perceive you. Understanding how others see you will allow you to identify your own blind spots.
- External self-awareness is "who others say you are."

Spiritual Self Awareness

- Spiritual self-awareness is knowing "who God says you are."
- God's Word reveals who God says you are. The Bible can serve as a type of mirror that shows you things about yourself. **James 1:23-25 – For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (NKJV)**
- Who God says you are is the most meaningful thing of all. There is no created thing

or being that can stand against what God has said about you. **Romans 8:33-39** – Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)

- Jesus is interceding for you before the Father. With Jesus on your side, you are more than a conqueror. Jesus is saying good things about you to the Father. With His words on your side, any bad pattern can be reversed. **Luke 1:37** – For with God nothing will be impossible. (NKJV)

Focus on the “what” not the “why”

- When you think about your problems, avoid asking “why” questions: “Why did this happen?” “Why is so-and-so the way s/he is?” Etc.
- “Why” questions trap you looking into the rearview mirror.
- Rather, ask “what” questions. “What things are important to me?” “What values do I have?” “What matters to me?” Etc.
- “What” questions enable you to identify the path in front of you that leads to God’s purpose for you.
- If you haven’t already done so, surrender your life to Jesus. Verbally, out loud, declare your commitment to letting Him manage your life.
- God will lead you, step-by-step, to the future He already has in place for you.

Reflective Questions for Déjà Vu – Breaking the Cycle

1. When you have experienced “bad patterns” in your life, did you learn something about yourself you did not know before? If so, what was that thing?
2. Looking back at your life, identify a time when you were in the middle of a “good pattern”. Describe what that time felt like.

3. During that good time, what things were important to you? Were those things different from when you were in the middle of bad times? Were those things of importance during the good times more in alignment with God's word than in the bad times?
4. What does it mean to surrender one's life to Jesus? What habits are part of one's life when one has surrendered it to Jesus?
5. What things can you do on a daily basis to keep focused on what is God's plan for you?