

CLOSING EMOTIONAL GATES

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6. YIELDING TO THE IDOL OF PEOPLE-PLEASING AND THE FEAR OF MAN

Proverbs 29:25 KJV

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

We often disguise people-pleasing as having a servant's heart, but in reality, it is a dangerous emotional gate. When you care more about the opinions of people than the commands of God, you have made an idol out of human approval. The enemy loves a people-pleaser because they are easily manipulated. He will send toxic people into your life to drain your energy, knowing you do not have the boundaries to say no.

When your mind is governed by the fear of rejection, you surrender the steering wheel of your life to whoever happens to be shouting the loudest. The psychological effect of people-pleasing is a total loss of identity and chronic exhaustion. Your mind becomes a chaotic war zone of trying to anticipate what everyone else wants from you. You become a chameleon, changing your convictions and your personality depending on what room you walk into. This constant emotional gymnastics leads to severe anxiety because you are bearing a weight God never asked you to carry. You eventually forget who God created you to be because you have spent years trying to be what everybody else demanded.

The relational carnage of this gate is bitter resentment. You end up overcommitting to strangers and giving the leftovers to your own family. Your spouse and children watch you bend over backward for people in the church or at work, while they get a burned-out, irritable version of you at home. Eventually, you will secretly hate the very people you are trying to please,

destroying authentic connection because your relationships are built on performance rather than truth.

Actionable Steps to Close the Gate

To shut this gate, you must reclaim your authority in three ways.

First, practice saying "no" to at least one non-essential demand this week without offering a long, apologetic explanation; let your "no" be a complete sentence.

Second, establish a strict priority system where the needs of your immediate family are met before you accept any outside assignments from the church, job, or friends.

Third, spend time every morning anchoring your identity in Scripture before looking at your phone, deciding that God's approval is the only metric that will define your worth that day.

7. MAINTAINING A VICTIM MENTALITY AND WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY

John 5:6 KJV

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

Terrible things happen in this fallen world, and the pain you experienced was not your fault. But when you allow your trauma to become your permanent identity, you open a massive gate to the enemy. A victim mentality says, "I am broken, it is everyone else's fault, and there is nothing I can do about it." The devil loves self-pity because it paralyzes your faith. It convinces you that God's power is not big enough to overcome your history. When you build a monument to your pain, the enemy will gladly move in and help you maintain it.

Psychologically, a victim mentality creates a state of learned helplessness. Your brain becomes wired for defeat. You view every setback, every minor inconvenience, and every disagreement as further proof that the universe is

against you. You lose all sense of agency. Depression settles in deep because you have convinced yourself that you are merely a passenger in your own life, totally at the mercy of how other people treat you. You stop trying to heal, waiting on an apology from someone who may never give it. The relational carnage here is heavy and exhausting. You drain the life out of everyone around you. Friends and spouses get worn out trying to rescue you, encourage you, and lift you up, only to have you shoot down every solution they offer. You unknowingly manipulate people through guilt, demanding constant validation for your pain. Eventually, healthy people will walk away because they realize they cannot fix you, leaving you even more isolated and convinced that your victim narrative was right all along.

Actionable Steps to Close the Gate

To shut this gate, you must take back ownership of your life through three steps.

First, look in the mirror and declare out loud that while you did not cause your pain, you are taking 100 percent responsibility for your healing process moving forward.

Second, interrupt the cycle of self-pity by keeping a daily record of gratitude, forcing your mind to identify three specific ways God showed you mercy each day.

Third, purposefully serve someone else whose problems are heavier than yours; stepping into someone else's storm is the fastest way to shrink the size of your own.

8. CONSUMING TOXIC CULTURE AND LEAVING YOUR MIND UNGUARDED

Romans 12:2 KJV

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We do not just eat with our mouths; we eat with our eyes and our ears. Whatever you consistently consume will eventually consume you. If you

spend hours scrolling through social media, binge-watching content that glorifies dysfunction, and listening to voices that promote ungodly values, you are leaving your gates wide open. You cannot feed on the world's garbage all week and expect to have the mind of Christ on Sunday. The enemy uses unguarded consumption to slowly rewrite your core beliefs, lowering your defenses until sin looks normal and holiness looks extreme.

The psychological effect of unguarded consumption is a profound desensitization and chronic discontentment. Your mind is flooded with images of what you do not have, sparking intense jealousy and comparison. Brain fog and low-level anxiety become your normal state because your nervous system is constantly overstimulated by artificial drama. You lose the ability to focus, to meditate on Scripture, and to hear the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit because your mental bandwidth is entirely jammed by cultural noise.

The relational carnage of this gate is the destruction of real intimacy. You start holding your spouse to the unrealistic, highly edited standards you see on a screen. You bring the drama, the foolishness, and the combativeness of the culture straight into your living room. Instead of communicating with grace, you start arguing with your family using the toxic talking points you picked up on the internet. It breeds a spirit of dissatisfaction that makes you ungrateful for the beautiful, real-life blessings God has placed right in front of you.

Actionable Steps to Close the Gate

To shut this gate, you must aggressively filter your intake through three actions.

First, execute a ruthless seven-day fast from all social media, secular news, and toxic entertainment to give your brain a chemical and spiritual detox.

Second, perform an audit of your devices, unfollowing any accounts or platforms that provoke lust, comparison, anger, or discontentment in your spirit.

Third, replace the time you used to spend scrolling with an intentional regimen of consuming the Word of God, worship music, and teaching that builds up your inner man.

9. CLINGING TO CONTROL AND REFUSING TO

SURRENDER

Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We like to call it "being organized" or "planning ahead," but often, it is just a fleshly desire to play God in our own lives. When you refuse to surrender the outcomes to the Lord and insist on micromanaging every detail, you open a gate to torment. The enemy uses your desire for control to convince you that if you do not hold everything together, it will all fall apart. This is a subtle arrogance that says God cannot be trusted to handle your future, your children, or your finances without your constant supervision.

The psychological effect of clinging to control is obsessive thinking and debilitating stress. You cannot sleep at night because your mind is constantly spinning, trying to figure out how to manipulate tomorrow's circumstances. You live in a state of high alert. When something inevitably goes off script, you experience panic attacks and meltdowns because your sense of safety was tied to your own power, not God's sovereignty. The mental burden of trying to run the universe will absolutely break your mind. The relational carnage is that you become a dictator in your own home. You smother your children, demanding perfection and crushing their spirits because you are terrified of them making a mistake. You emasculate your husband or disrespect your wife because you do not trust them to do things "your way." People will eventually rebel against your control. You push away the people you love most because no one wants to live under the constant microscope of someone who refuses to let God be God.

Actionable Steps to Close the Gate

To shut this gate, you must break the idol of control with three practical steps.

First, write down the specific situation you are trying to manipulate, physically place that paper in your Bible, and verbally resign from the job of being the general manager of the universe.

Second, intentionally delegate a task in your home or ministry that you

usually micromanage, and force yourself to let the person do it imperfectly without stepping in to save it.

Third, pray a prayer of total surrender every morning before your feet hit the floor, explicitly giving God permission to disrupt your plans that day for His glory.

10. ENTERTAINING PRIDE AND REJECTING GODLY CORRECTION

Proverbs 16:18 KJV

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Pride is the original sin, and it remains one of the widest gates you can open to demonic influence. When you reach a place where you can no longer be corrected, you are in grave spiritual danger. Pride convinces you that you are the smartest person in the room and that your perspective is flawless. When you reject pastoral guidance, wise counsel, and the gentle conviction of the Holy Spirit, you hand the enemy a blindfold. He will let you keep walking in your arrogance until you walk right off a cliff.

Psychologically, pride creates a deep spiritual blindness and a severe defensive posture. You literally lose the capacity to see your own flaws. Your mind builds elaborate justifications for your bad behavior. Whenever you are challenged, your immediate reflex is aggression. You live with an inflated sense of ego that is secretly masking deep insecurity. You cannot handle criticism, so you surround yourself with yes-men, creating an echo chamber of delusion where you never have to face the truth about your own heart. The relational carnage of pride is a trail of broken trust and severed covenants. Pride destroys marriages because it makes you incapable of saying, "I was wrong, and I am sorry."

Every argument has to be won, even if it means destroying your spouse in the process. You alienate your friends and your leaders because you always assume they are attacking you when they are actually trying to save you. Pride leaves you standing entirely alone on a pedestal of your own making, isolated, defensive, and deeply vulnerable to the enemy's final strike.

Actionable Steps to Close the Gate

To shut this gate, you must crush your ego through three acts of humility.

First, go to someone you have recently dismissed, argued with, or overpowered, and offer a specific, unreserved apology with zero excuses attached to it.

Second, ask a trusted spiritual leader or spouse to honestly point out a blind spot or flaw in your character, and sit in silence to receive it without defending yourself.

Third, purposefully take the lowest seat this week by serving in a hidden, unglamorous capacity where no one will applaud you and no one will say your name.