



# Processing the Issues of Your Heart

*Participant Guide*

## Part 2: Affect

*"What is in your heart?"  
"How have you been affected?"*

**In Part 2, we begin to explore the ways you have been impacted by this offense, hurt, or loss.**

What is in your heart? How have you been affected by this offense, hurt, or loss?

Take some time to pause and consider what your thoughts have been toward this person or event. What have your thoughts been toward yourself? Toward God? What have your feelings been- or have you been numbing them for so long you don't even feel anymore? Describing your thoughts and feelings in detail begins to release the weight in your heart. Present feelings are indicators of past pain.

### **Illustration: The Water Bottle**



Would you be able to hold an unopened full plastic water bottle in one hand for 5 minutes? You may say, "Yes, no problem! If we asked you to hold your arm straight out and hold the same bottle, you probably could do that, too, for a time. But, if I asked you to hold it for seven, eight, nine, or ten minutes while talking about something else, you may begin to feel the weight of the bottle is too much to handle. "I can handle it," is what we say to ourselves. But over time, the weight of our struggles (from the past or present) begins to be too much to carry on our own. When dealing with the effects of the 'GAP' we are processing, the stress of life is too much to handle in our own strength. It is important to acknowledge the weight and resolve it according to God's design. You weren't designed to carry the weight of your struggles alone.

Let's dive in to the questions in the booklet.

## Part 2: Affect

*"What is in your heart?"*

*"How have you been affected?"*

**Start by praying through the scripture below, asking the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What does the scripture say to you?**

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."  
– Psalm 139:23 NIV*

### **A. What have your thoughts been?**

These could be thoughts toward yourself and/or toward God as well. Think of this as the 'internal conscious tapes' in your mind. Things you may never say out loud, but have thought or continue to think. Ex: "I will always be this way." "I am so fat." "God, you must hate me." There are endless possibilities of what our thoughts could be. These are just a few examples. The goal is to begin to get in touch with the way you thought or maybe are still thinking.

### **B. What have your thoughts been toward the person involved (as applicable)?**

Narrow in your focus a little more now and specifically write out the thoughts you had or have towards the person you are processing. Ex: "I hate it when you do that." "He is so dumb" "I want you to hurt just as much as you hurt me!" "You make me feel gross." It may take some time to really 'go back' to the way you used to think, especially if this was a formative relationship from the time of your early childhood. Give yourself time, and ask God to help you. It's critical to begin to understand the ways you have been thinking. It helps you to understand your current struggles.

### **C. What have your feelings been?**

Feelings indicate something is going on internally. If you have been a person who has learned to numb or shut off your emotions and feelings, this part may take some time and soul searching. You may think you are 'just fine,' but over time, the weight of your struggles becomes too much to handle. Be specific and transparent with how your heart is feeling. Use the word bank as a tool to get you started. You may also have other words that apply. Many times, it helps to put our feelings into sentences. Write out how this specific offense, hurt, or loss has affected you.

Here are some examples:

*"I feel anxious when \_\_\_\_\_"*

*"I felt lonely when \_\_\_\_\_"*

*"I feel angry when \_\_\_\_\_"*

*"When he \_\_\_\_\_ it made me feel rejected."*

Do not move forward until you have been able to identify the feelings in your heart and how this specific offense, hurt, or loss has been affecting you.