

Suspicious Minds: Week Four



January 29th, 2023

The Distortion of Emotional Reasoning:

Emotional reasoning leads you to believe that the way you feel is a reflection of reality. "*I feel this way about this situation; hence it must be a fact,*" defines this cognitive distortion. For example, feeling inadequate in a situation turns into, "*I don't belong anywhere.*" This cognitive distortion might also lead you to believe future events depend on how you feel. For example, you may firmly believe something bad will happen today because you woke up feeling anxious. You might also assess a random situation based on your emotional reaction. If someone says something that makes you angry, you immediately conclude that person is treating you poorly.

Remember Scripture tells us...

- **Proverbs 14:12** (NIV) — *¹²There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*
- **Jeremiah 17:9** (NIV) — *⁹The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

Truth is that which has been revealed by God, who created and sustains reality.

Maturity is to learn to think and see truth—battling and winning the war of our mind. **2 Corinthians 10:3–5** (NIV); **Hebrews 5:12–14** (NIV)

This week—thinking and living in joy—**REJOICING**.

1. The fruit of the Spirit is the product of the gift of the Spirit of God who moves into us. **Acts 2:38** (NIV); **Galatians 5:22–23** (NIV)
2. We are told to, and are able to rejoice – to put on joy:
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18** (NIV) — *¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*
 - **Philippians 3:1** (NIV) — *¹Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.*

The process of rejoicing –We are commanded to rejoice (*this is Gods will for us*):

- What does it mean to rejoice? To put on joy.
- Is rejoicing a feeling or a way of thinking –yes!!!
- We can actually rewire our brains.
- Happiness is circumstantial – joy is something we put on as we think through that which is true – renewing our mind – we see God's activity and His promised continued activity.
- Kay Warren (Choose Joy) "*Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things.*"

1. Accepting I have feelings and thoughts that are not based on truth.

- Cognitive distortion.
- Some are more cerebral, and some are more emotional. God made us differently.
- "*The Heart*" in Scripture is "*the seat of the will where the thinking and feeling part of you sits and you must choose what you will do.*"
- We have thoughts and feelings that are broken and sinful. We have experiences that may have shaped us for a time, but remember that we have an enemy!

2. Reflect on my thinking and feelings – what is driving my thoughts and feelings?

- What I am thinking and feeling about _____. What are the causes of it?

- H.A.L.T.S.
 - Am I Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired, Stressed/Scared, and is it affecting my thoughts and feelings? **Romans 12:2** (NIV)
3. **Test my thoughts and feelings according to God’s Word –reality from God’s perspective.**
 4. **Choose to put on God’s perspective to change my brain.**
 - Continual rejoicing—thankfulness (*an ongoing ever-present mulling over...meditation*).
 - Rejoicing means we focus on the things that God has done, is doing, and promised to do, that we take for granted.
 - Rejoicing leads to gentleness (*a quiet confidence*).
 - The Lord is near, and He knows my name. He has a plan for me!
 - The peace of God comes as we remember who we are to God through Jesus.
 - Focus on these things...and take the next faithful obedient step to obey.
 - And remember, God is with you.
 - **Philippians 4:4–9** (NIV), **Philippians 4:10–13** (NIV); **1 Peter 5:6–7** (NIV)

The grateful brain: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/prefrontal-nudity/201211/the-grateful-brain>

“It has been found that 12 minutes of daily focused prayer over an 8-week period can change the brain to such an extent that it can be measured on a brain scan.” Dr. Caroline Leaf, Switch on Your Brain

Looking back and looking forward:

- Based on what you thought about, your attitude, your energy spent, what one word would describe your last year? Month? Day?
- My word for the year – Grateful.

Small Group Discussion:

Scriptures to consider:

- **1 Kings 19:9-13; Philippians 4:4-7; Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 145:17-19.**

QUESTIONS:

1. When have your emotions led you to make a really good (*or really bad*) decision?
2. On a scale from 1-10, how significantly do your emotions affect your thought life? 1 being not at all, 10 being they affect all my thoughts.
3. What circumstances or dynamics exist in your life right now that regularly create anxiety for you?
4. Read the story of Elijah in **1 Kings 19:9-13**, what can you do to lean in and hear God’s whisper among all the wind, fire, and earthquakes going on around you now in this circumstance?
5. How do you keep your emotions in check when making decisions?
6. How does rejoicing or thankfulness change your perspective? How does that affect your emotions?
7. When are you most likely to rejoice? What makes it hard for you to rejoice?
8. Who do you know that is consistently joy-filled? What about them makes you say they are joy-filled?