

Encounter Church
Sunday February 01, 2026

Lighten the Load
Unload Toxic Influence

INTRODUCTION: It's true that my closest relationships have the power to influence my life!

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NLT)- "....."bad company corrupts good character."

Show me your inner circle and I'll show you your future!

Proverbs 13:20 (MSG)- "Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces."

***Most often our close relationships have more influence on us than we realize!
Not everybody is supposed to be a close friend with you!***

BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE RELATIONSHIPS YOU CAN'T GET AWAY FROM?

Spouse, parent, child, sibling, co-worker.

TODAY WE'LL TALK ABOUT HOW TO UNLOAD TOXIC INFLUENCE. ESPECIALLY WHEN SEPARATION IS NOT POSSIBLE!

WHAT DOES A TOXIC PERSON LOOK LIKE?

1. They are habitually negative.

Everything they say is negative, negative, negative! There's rarely anything good or positive coming out of their mouth!

2 Timothy 2:16-17 (NLT)- "Avoid worthless, foolish talk that only leads to more godless behavior. 17 This kind of talk spreads like cancer, as in the case of Hymenaeus and Philetus."

Negativity is the only cancer that spreads by contact!

2. They are overly controlling.

They want to control everything and everyone around them and that includes you!

They ***manipulate*** to get what they want!

They **intimidate** to get what they want!
They **dominate** to get what they want!

3. They are lovingly abusive with their words.

They say that they love you but their words toward you and others are hateful, demeaning, destructive and harsh!

Their words are continually an attempt to tear you down and not build you up!

HOW DO I UNLOAD TOXIC INFLUENCE?

1. Be a Child of God

Reconnect with your true Identity!

1 John 3:1 (NLT): "See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him."

That toxic person doesn't recognize **whose** and **who** you are! But you need to remember **whose** and **who** you are!

AND HE HAS LAVISHED HIS LOVE ON YOU!

2 Corinthians 6:18 (NIV): "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

God has already made up his mind that he loves and wants you as his child and you're not going to change his mind!

Galatians 4:6–7 (NLT): "And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.' Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir."

You do not have to be a slave to toxicity!

BE A CHILD OF GOD!

2. Follow Jesus

Take the High Road

Jesus was a High Road Leader! He said crazy things like:

Luke 6:31 (NLT)- "Do to others as you would like them to do to you."

NOT AS THEY'VE DONE TO YOU!

If you react to toxic with toxic you're toxic and need to unload that toxic influence!

In fact, Jesus expects us to be different!

Luke 6:32-36 (NLT)- "If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. "Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate."

Wait a minute, now I have to act like a Child of God? Jesus seems to think so!

When I'm in a toxic environment the only proof that I'm not becoming toxic is that I'm acting different than the toxic person. I've unloaded the toxic influence.

I'm being a Child of God and I'm acting like a Child of God!

3. Do Good

Romans 12:17-21- "Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord. Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good."

Don't allow a toxic person or situation to conquer you. You conquer, unload toxic influence by being God's child and acting like God's child and doing good, trusting God with the outcome!

AND LAST OF ALL REMEMBER THIS:

4. You have a Helper

John 14:15-18-(NLT)- “If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.”

Advocate- Comforter, Encourager, Counselor, Helper!

HE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU! HE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT!

WHEN YOU’RE IN A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT YOU MAY FEEL ALL ALONE BUT YOU’RE NOT!

CONCLUSION: Are you in a toxic environment you can’t separate from. You can unload the influence of the toxic environment.

I’m a Child of God and I’m going to follow Jesus and do good with the HELP of the Holy Spirit who will never leave me because He is here to comfort me, encourage me and guide me!

Let’s Pray!