

Summary

- a) This session is the seventh of ten sessions that looks at a vital principle that fosters Spirit-led living. The seventh principle that we will examine is this: Renewing your mind comes from meditation, and meditation always determines your orientation, whether you live from the spirit, soul, or body.
- b) This session looks at mental strongholds and the need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. More specifically, this session looks at the stronghold of rejection, including the causes and results of rejection, and how to be healed and delivered from the root of rejection.

Introduction

- a) In 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Paul said, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”
- b) Notice that obedience to Christ is linked to how you think: “We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”
- c) Complete obedience is bridal readiness. Therefore, a key part of making yourself ready as a bride for Jesus Christ is waging war against the mental strongholds that block or hinder Christ’s life from flowing within you.
- d) For the past two sessions, I talked about the strongholds of unworthiness and rejection. In this session, I will continue describing the stronghold of rejection. These two mindsets function like ancient city walls, keeping Christ out while keeping self-life insulated.
- e) The key to living a victorious, Spirit-led life is deconstructing these fleshly thinking patterns one lie at a time. How? By confronting each lie with truth.
- f) Jesus said, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32).
- g) Knowing the truth always brings freedom from mental strongholds, paving the way for Christ in you to live His life through you.

Two Soils

- a) Rejection starts as a seed planted into your life through something that happens to you.
- b) Trees have roots, and roots determine fruit.
- c) Bad fruit comes from a bad root. Good fruit comes from a good root.
- d) Whatever soil your root system is rooted and ground in will determine the type of fruit you produce in your life.
- e) You will either be planted in the soil of rejection or the soil of God’s love through Jesus Christ.
- f) Paul said, “That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:17-19).

- g) A tree rooted and grounded in God's love produces the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).
- h) If you are rooted and grounded in rejection, you will produce the rotten fruit of rejection, including low self-esteem, inferiority, insecurity, rebellion, independence, judgmentalism, anger, control, bitterness, escapism, distrust, jealousy, fear, hopelessness, depression, defensiveness, hardness, cynicism, competition, perfectionism, withdrawal, and isolation.

How Rejection Affects You

- a) God created us to be loved by Him and others and to love Him and others. He designed us for the first and second commandments—to love God with all our hearts and to love others as we have been loved. Love for God and others overflows from experiencing love first.
- b) 1 John 4:19 states, "We love, because He first loved us."
- c) We have a strong innate need for social connection and acceptance. Whenever you experience rejection, it threatens this fundamental need, creating many different types of responses.
- d) Because everyone is different, no one responds to rejection in the same way. The way people respond to rejection is complex and depends upon various factors, including your personality, the nature of the rejection, and your social context.
- e) Most people don't realize how much rejection has affected who they are and the negative fruit that they have produced from the root of rejection.
- f) The purpose of describing how rejection affects you is to shine light upon the fruit of rejection in your life. This will help you overcome the root of rejection by seeing how you have responded to rejection or might respond in the future. This will help lead you to experience healing and deliverance from the root of rejection. As a result, you will be transplanted from the soil of rejection to the soil of God's love, allowing you to then produce the fruit of the Spirit.
- g) When you see the fruit of rejection in your life, it helps you to respond differently to rejection. You learn to sink your roots deeper into God's love, which is the only thing that can heal you and produce good fruit.
- h) Let's take a deeper look at the fruit of rejection.

Rebellion

- a) Rejection often triggers intense negative emotions, such as anger, sadness, and frustration. When we feel rejected, we may experience a sense of injustice or unfair treatment. These emotions can fuel a desire to resist or rebel against the source of rejection.
- b) A need to belong: Because rejection threatens one's fundamental need to be accepted and to belong, rebelling against social norms, rules, or authority figures helps them regain a sense of belonging, validation from others, and proving their worth.
- c) Different forms: Rebellion from rejection can take various forms, such as engaging in deviant behavior, challenging authority, or adopting unconventional lifestyles.
- d) Bolster self-esteem: Since rejection can impact a person's self-esteem and self-worth, some people may respond to rejection by attempting to bolster their self-esteem through acts of rebellion. This can provide a temporary sense of empowerment, control, and self-worth.
- e) Examples: Teenagers experimenting with drugs and alcohol, breaking rules, and joining the party scene; the LGBTQ+ rights movement; and terrorists organizations, such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Isis.

Independence

- a) Self-protection: When someone experiences rejection, it often leads to greater self-reliance and independence, as they seek to protect themselves from future rejection and to overcome the emotional pain associated with rejection.
- b) Self-reliance: Rejection often motivates people to reflect upon their own identity, values, and desires, leading to a deeper self-discovery. This causes them to rely on themselves more than seeking external validation and approval.
- c) Less reliant: Because rejection makes you realize that you can't always rely on others, this can lead to becoming more self-sufficient and less dependent on others.
- d) Motivator: Rejection can be a powerful motivator for personal growth. The desire to prove yourself or to overcome past rejection can drive you to pursue education, career advancement, or personal development independently.
- e) Examples: Entrepreneurship, academic success, artistic achievements, athletic accomplishments, political activism, career advancement, and personal development.

Anger

- a) Rejection can trigger feelings of anger due to the emotional and mental impact it has on you. Anger is a natural response to perceived injustice, hurt, or threats to your identity, worth, value, and well-being.
- b) Self-esteem: Because rejection threatens your self-esteem, self-worth, and value as a person, this perceived devaluation can lead to anger.
- c) Pain and hurt: Rejection can be emotionally painful. The emotional pain, such as sadness and heartache, can manifest as anger when you struggle to cope with and express these intense emotions. Anger may act as a defense mechanism to mask or alleviate the emotional pain.
- d) Expression of pain: Some people may express their emotional pain through anger because it feels more acceptable or powerful. Anger may be a way to communicate the hurt and frustration you are experiencing.
- e) Coping mechanism: Anger can be a coping mechanism. It allows you to temporarily alleviate emotional distress by channeling your energy into a more active and aggressive emotional state.
- f) Defense mechanism: Anger can serve as a defense mechanism in response to perceived or real threats. It can create a barrier between you and the source of rejection, potentially deterring further rejection or harm.
- g) Injustice: Rejection can feel unfair or unjust, especially when it is perceived as unwarranted or based on prejudice or bias. This sense of injustice can trigger anger as a response to the perceived mistreatment.
- h) Frustration: Rejection often represents a failure to achieve a desired outcome, whether it's in a personal relationship, job, or other aspects of life. This frustration over unmet desires and goals can turn into anger when you feel thwarted or denied what you believe you deserve.
- i) Loss of control: Rejection can make you feel powerless or out of control. The loss of control over a situation can evoke anger as a reaction to the helplessness you feel when unable to influence or change the outcome.
- j) Protection of self-esteem: Anger can be a way to protect your self-esteem. By feeling angry, you may avoid confronting your own vulnerabilities or insecurities brought about by rejection.

- k) Examples: A father rejected by their father enraged by their child's actions. A child with a root of rejection is outraged when corrected by their parents, viewing correction as rejection.

Bitterness

- a) Hebrews 12:15 warns us, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."
- b) Rejection can cause bitterness through a combination of emotional and mental factors. Bitterness is a complex emotion characterized by intense resentment, cynicism, and a prolonged sense of injustice.
- c) Lingering pain: Rejection often inflicts emotional pain, which can be deep and lasting. If you have experienced this type of pain, it can fester and lead to bitterness over time. The lingering emotional distress associated with rejection can evolve into resentment, anger, and bitterness.
- d) Unmet expectations: Rejection frequently involves unmet expectations or desires. When your expectations are not met, you can become resentful and bitter, feeling as though you were owed something you did not receive.
- e) Bitter at the Lord: Not only can you become bitter toward people, you can also grow bitter toward the Lord, especially when you believe He has failed you, let you down, disappointed you, didn't meet your expectations, or didn't act on your timetable. Perhaps He didn't answer your prayers, fulfill His promises, or He delayed answering your requests, disrupting your nicely laid out plans for your life. If you have experienced what Bob Sorge called the fire of delayed answers, it's easy to become offended at the Lord and allow small seeds of bitterness to be implanted in your heart.
- f) Reacting to pain: Though the causes of bitterness are almost endless, the reaction to pain is usually the same. If you have experienced rejection, abuse, abandonment, or offense, your natural reaction is to allow seeds of bitterness to take root in your heart. Unless you take decisive steps to stop bitterness from lodging in your heart, it's easy to become enslaved to bitterness.
- g) Mental torment: A bitter heart and mind is preoccupied with how you can exact revenge on someone for hurting you. When this happens, your thoughts will be dominated by the pain someone caused you, the abuse you experienced, and feelings of rejection, spite, and even hate towards a person for their evil-hearted actions against you. Focusing on the pain someone caused you or how you will exact revenge keeps bitterness alive, even magnifying it.
- h) Bitterness emits a spiritual odor: People imprisoned by a bitter mind are tormented by cynicism, spite, contempt, and even rage. Intense and prolonged thoughts of animosity, resentment, and anger dominate their thinking. It's as if they emit a rancorous odor that keeps others away.
- i) Bitterness is spiritual suicide: Like the familiar saying goes, unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. When stated like this, bitterness looks suicidal, doesn't it?
- j) Bitterness defiles others: Not only does the root of bitterness sever you from receiving God's grace, but it also poisons and defiles others. As Hebrews 12:15 states, bitterness springs up, causes trouble, and defiles many. Often, if bitterness has lodged in your heart, you won't even notice it. Though everyone around you sees the ugly fruit of bitterness damaging your relationships with friends and family, you can't even see it.
- k) Lack of resolution: If rejection remains unresolved, with no closure or opportunity for reconciliation, it can lead to bitterness, hindering you from moving past the rejection and making sense of it.
- l) Coping mechanism: Like anger, bitterness can also be a way of coping with the emotional pain of rejection. It might provide a sense of control or power in a situation where you feel powerless.

Insecurity and Inferiority

- a) Threat to self-worth: Rejection can be a direct assault on your self-worth and self-esteem. When you experience rejection, you may interpret it as evidence that you are not good enough, attractive enough, smart enough, funny enough, or capable enough. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.
- b) Comparison: Rejection can trigger comparison, where you compare yourself to others, especially those who were not rejected or who appear to have qualities or attributes that you perceive is lacking in you. This comparison can intensify feelings of inferiority.
- c) Self-criticism: Rejection can fuel negative self-talk and self-criticism. You may engage in harsh self-judgment, constantly reminding yourself of your perceived shortcomings or flaws, which can further undermine your self-esteem.
- d) Loss of confidence: Rejection can erode your confidence. If you have been repeatedly rejected, it can lead to a lack of self-assurance and a diminished belief in your abilities and desirability.
- e) Self-doubt: Rejection can plant seeds of self-doubt in your mind. You begin to question your decisions, judgments, and actions, fearing that you are prone to making mistakes or that you lack the ability to make sound choices.
- f) Internalizing rejection: If you internalize rejection, you see rejection as a reflection of your lack inherent qualities, value, and worth as a person, rather than as a situational or context-specific event. This internalization can lead to feelings of personal inadequacy and insecurity.
- g) Impact on identity: Rejection can challenge your sense of identity. If you were rejected in a context related to your identity, such as race, gender, nationality, etc., it can lead to feelings of insecurity and inferiority related to that aspect of your identity.
- h) Craving affirmation: If you have experienced rejection, it's easy to become overly dependent on others' validation or praise. This can have a lasting effect on your relationships. Leading you to be clingy or cautious in forming new connections.
- i) Self-fulfilling prophecy: Feelings of insecurity and inferiority stemming from rejection can become self-fulfilling prophecies. When you believe you are inferior, you may not put yourself forward, take risks, or pursue opportunities, which can limit your personal, professional, and ministry growth.

Escapism

- a) Rejection can lead to escapism—a coping mechanism used to deal with the emotional pain and mental distress rejection often brings.
- b) Escapism is the tendency to seek distraction or relief from reality, typically through activities or behaviors that allow you to detach from your problems, emotions, or pain.
- c) Some common forms of escapism are: Watching TV; movies; playing video games; addiction to social media; alcohol or drug abuse; overeating; pornography; and shopping.
- d) Obviously, some of these forms of escapism are not inherently negative, such as TV, movies, video games, social media, food, and shopping. If these are used as a means of avoiding real-life problems, responsibilities, or to temporarily relieve pain, then it can become problematic.
- e) Emotional relief or numbing: Escapism offers a way to temporarily escape the painful emotions caused by rejection through engaging in activities that provide a sense of relief or emotional numbing.

- f) Avoidance of reality: Rejection often confronts individuals with an unpleasant reality or the need to deal with challenging emotions and thoughts. Escapism provides an alternative, often easier, route to avoid facing the reality of rejection and its emotional consequences.
- g) Self-preservation: Escapism can be a self-preservation strategy. When rejection threatens your self-esteem or self-worth, escaping reality is a way to protect your fragile self-esteem and to maintain a sense of mental and emotional safety.
- h) Temporary relief: Escapist activities, such as watching TV, playing video games, excessive alcohol use, drugs, or pornography can offer immediate pleasure or distraction. This temporary relief can be appealing in the face of the pain and discomfort associated with rejection, providing short-term gratification, a temporary elevation of mood, the release of endorphins, or providing brief comfort.
- i) A sense of control: Escapism allows you to control your environment and experiences, unlike the uncontrollable and unpredictable nature of rejection. It provides a sense of mastery over a situation when you may feel powerless.
- j) Coping mechanism: Escapism can serve as a coping mechanism, helping you to cope with stress and emotional pain. It can provide a respite from constant, unpleasant thoughts related to rejection.

Distrust and Cynicism

- a) When you experience rejection, especially from people or situations you once trusted, it can undermine your faith in others, making you more skeptical, cynical, and guarded in future relationships or interactions.
- b) Cynicism often arises from a sense of disillusionment, mistrust, and skepticism about human nature and relationships.
- c) Expectations violated: Rejection often involves a violation of expectations. When you expect acceptance, support, or positive feedback, but instead experience rejection, it can shatter your trust in the reliability of a relationship. Rejection can often be a stark reminder of the discrepancy between your expectations and the harsh reality of human behavior. When you expect acceptance, support, or fairness, but instead experience rejection, you may become more skeptical about the trustworthiness of others, causing you to become more cynical.
- d) Fear of rejection: The pain of rejection can lead to a fear of experiencing similar hurt in the future. To protect yourself from further emotional pain, you may become more skeptical and guarded, leading to distrust of others.
- e) Betrayal: In some cases, rejection can feel like a form of betrayal, especially when it comes from close friends, family, or those you trust. Such betrayal can lead to distrust in your heart. This can result in feelings of disappointment and disillusionment, which are fertile grounds for cynicism.
- f) Cynicism: Repeated or significant rejection can cause you to be more cynical in your outlook on life and relationships. You may become pessimistic about others' intentions, assuming that they will let you down. You can easily generalize your negative experiences, viewing human nature and relationships more negatively. You may begin to see others as driven primarily by self-interest and personal gain.
- g) Reduced idealization: Rejection can shatter idealized views you may have held about human nature, society, or relationships. When these idealizations crumble, cynicism begins to grow.
- h) Self-protection: Distrust and cynicism can serve as protective mechanisms. When you have been hurt by rejection, you may become less willing to open up, be vulnerable, or trust others as a way to prevent future emotional injuries. Distrust and cynicism can be a way to protect yourself from being taken advantage of, deceived, or manipulated. This allows you to distance yourself from potential sources of hurt and to approach interactions with a guarded, skeptical attitude.

- i) Projection: If you have been rejected in a romantic relationship, for example, you might project distrust in other relationships.
- j) Disillusionment: Rejection can shatter illusions or idealizations you may have had about others. This disillusionment can contribute to a more skeptical and distrustful perspective.
- k) Loss of confidence: Rejection can erode self-confidence, leading you to question your own judgment. This can make you more likely to distrust your own ability to assess and trust others.
- l) Negative attribution bias: If you have experienced rejection, it's easy to interpret ambiguous or neutral comments or interactions in a negative way. This cognitive bias reinforces cynical beliefs about others' motives and intentions.
- m) Loss of confidence in social systems: Experiencing rejection, especially within social systems, churches, organizations, or institutions that were once trusted, can lead to a broader loss of confidence in those systems. This disillusionment can translate into cynicism regarding the integrity of those institutions.