

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 three sessions, I have talked about the strongholds of unworthiness and rejection. In this session, I will continue describing the stronghold of rejection. A mindset of rejection functions like an ancient city wall, 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.

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 has been 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 so that you can experience healing and deliverance and produce the fruit of the Spirit. My goal is to help transplant you from the soil of rejection to the soil of God's love.
- g) When you see the fruit of rejection in your life, it helps you to respond differently and to sink your roots deeper into the only thing that can heal you and produce good fruit—God's infinite love.
- h) 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).

The Fruit of Rejection

- a) In the last session, we looked at some of the fruit produced by the root of rejection. More specifically, we looked at rebellion, independence, anger, bitterness, insecurity, inferiority, and escapism. In this session, we will continue to look at some of the fruit produced by the root of rejection, including distrust, cynicism, jealousy, judgmentalism, fear, defensiveness, and hardness.
- b) Let's take a deeper look at the fruit of rejection.
- c) Please note that I used ChatGPT as a tool to help me explain the following fruits of rejection. Most of what is listed below is the output of me asking ChatGPT, "How and why does rejection cause _____."
- d) Since I am not a psychologist nor have a degree in counseling, I did this to help me learn better some of the psychological reactions to rejection. I then filtered out some of what was produced and rephrased some of the output into my own words. I then attempted to internalize this, and my sermon was my best attempt to speak this these psychological principles in my own words and experiences.

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 and disillusionment: 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) 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.
- k) 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.

Jealousy

- a) Threat to self-esteem: Rejection can be perceived as a threat to your self-esteem and self-worth. If you feel rejected, you may interpret it as a sign that you are not valued or appreciated, which can trigger feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. Jealousy may arise when you compare yourself to others who seem to be accepted or preferred.
- b) Fear of loss: Rejection often involves the fear of losing future relationships or connections that you value. This fear can intensify feelings of jealousy, especially if you perceive that someone else has gained the acceptance or approval that you desire. The fear of being replaced or overlooked can evoke jealousy.
- c) Comparison: Rejection can lead to comparison, where you compare yourself to others in terms of attractiveness, success, or popularity. If you perceive others as more successful or appealing, jealousy may arise, fueled by the belief that you are being overshadowed or overlooked.
- d) Insecurity: Rejection can amplify existing feelings of insecurity. If you already struggle with feelings of insecurity, rejection may intensify these emotions, making you more prone to jealousy as you perceive others as threats to your sense of security and stability.
- e) Desire for validation: Rejection can create a heightened desire for validation and acceptance. If you have experienced rejection, you may seek validation from others to compensate for the perceived loss. Seeing others receive attention or approval can trigger jealousy if you feel your own validation is at stake.
- f) Sense of unfairness: Perceiving rejection as unfair or unjust can contribute to jealousy. You may feel resentful or envious, believing that you deserved the acceptance or recognition that was denied to you.
- g) Impact on social status: Rejection can affect your social status and standing within a group. Jealousy may arise when you witness others gaining social approval or recognition, leading you to feel marginalized or excluded.

Judgmentalism

- a) Protection of self-esteem: Rejection can be a blow to your self-esteem and self-worth. To protect yourself from further emotional harm, you may engage in judgmental behavior as a defense mechanism. By focusing on the perceived shortcomings or faults of others, you may temporarily boost your sense of superiority or control.
- b) Attribution of blame: Rejection can create a sense of frustration, disappointment, or anger. To cope with these negative emotions, you may engage in judgmentalism by attributing blame to others. This allows you to externalize the source of your own distress, giving you a good reason for the rejection.
- c) Projection of insecurities: If you feel insecure or inadequate due to rejection, you may project your own insecurities onto others. This projection can manifest as judgmental attitudes, where you criticize or find fault in others to divert attention away from your own perceived shortcomings.
- d) Creation of social hierarchies: Rejection can lead to a greater desire for social acceptance and inclusion. When you feel excluded or rejected, you may attempt to establish a sense of superiority by creating social hierarchies (categories) and placing others in lower positions. Judgmental attitudes can be a way to assert dominance or control in the face of perceived social threats.
- e) Need for control: Rejection can evoke feelings of powerlessness and lack of control. Engaging in judgmental behavior provides a perceived sense of control, allowing you to categorize and evaluate others based on your own criteria, reinforcing a sense of order in your mind.
- f) Coping with uncertainty: Rejection often introduces uncertainty into relationships and social dynamics. Judgmentalism can serve as a way for you to reduce uncertainty by creating clear distinctions between yourself and others. Categorizing people into “good” or “bad” helps simplify the complexity of social interactions.
- g) Preservation of ego: Judgmental attitudes may be a way for you to preserve your ego and maintain a positive self-image in the face of rejection. By belittling or criticizing others, you may attempt to bolster your own perceived worth or superiority.
- h) Comparison: Rejection can trigger comparison, where you evaluate yourself in comparison to others. Judgmental attitudes may arise when you feel threatened by others’ success, happiness, or social standing, leading you to criticize and judge to protect your own self-esteem.

Fear

- a) Threat to social connection: Humans are inherently social beings, and the need for social connection is deeply ingrained. Rejection is perceived as a threat to this fundamental need, as it signifies a potential loss of social bonds, relationships, or belonging. The fear of being excluded or isolated from a social group can be intense.
- b) Fear of abandonment: Rejection, especially in close relationships, can trigger a fear of abandonment. The prospect of being left alone or disconnected from others can evoke feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and fear about your ability to cope without relational support.
- c) Impact on self-esteem: Rejection can have a profound impact on self-esteem. When you experience rejection, it may lead to self-doubt, questioning of your worth, and fear of being perceived as undesirable or unworthy. The fear of negative self-perception can contribute to overall anxiety.
- d) Fear of unmet needs: Rejection can create a fear of unmet emotional and psychological needs. You may fear that you won’t find acceptance, understanding, or validation elsewhere, leading to a heightened sense of vulnerability and fear about your emotional well-being.

- e) Anticipation of future rejection: Past experiences of rejection can create an anticipation of future rejection. If you have faced rejection, you may develop a fear of rejection, leading to heightened anxiety and apprehension in social situations.
- f) Fear of judgment: Rejection often involves the perception of being judged negatively by others. The fear of judgment can be powerful, as you may worry about how others perceive you, fear criticism, or anticipate negative evaluations that contribute to a sense of inadequacy.
- g) Fear of loneliness: Rejection is often associated with the potential for loneliness. The fear of being alone, without the companionship or support of others, can contribute to anxiety and apprehension.

Defensiveness

- a) Protecting self-esteem: Rejection can be a blow to your self-esteem, leading you to feel vulnerable and exposed. Defensiveness may arise as a protective mechanism to shield your self-esteem and preserve a positive self-image. By becoming defensive, you attempt to ward off feelings of inadequacy and maintain a sense of worth.
- b) Fear of further criticism: Rejection often involves some form of criticism or disapproval. The fear of additional criticism or negative evaluation can prompt defensiveness as you try to deflect or counteract perceived attacks on your character or abilities.
- c) Preserving identity: Rejection can challenge your sense of identity and belonging. Defensiveness may emerge as a way to protect and maintain a coherent sense of self. You may resist accepting negative feedback or criticism that threatens your self-concept.
- d) Avoiding emotional pain: The emotional pain associated with rejection can be intense. Defensiveness may serve as a coping mechanism to avoid experiencing this pain. By becoming defensive, you create a psychological barrier to shield yourself from the full impact of rejection.
- e) Need for control: Rejection can evoke a sense of powerlessness and lack of control. Defensiveness may arise as an attempt to regain a sense of control over the situation. You may try to manage and direct the narrative to align with your preferred interpretation.
- f) Fear of vulnerability: Rejection often makes you feel vulnerable and exposed. Defensiveness can be a strategy to avoid this vulnerability by creating a protective shield. By deflecting blame or minimizing the impact of rejection, you aim to reduce your perceived exposure to emotional risk.
- g) Cognitive dissonance reduction: When faced with rejection, you may experience cognitive dissonance—an inconsistency between your self-perception and the reality of being rejected. Defensiveness can be a way to reduce cognitive dissonance by dismissing or rationalizing the rejection in a manner that aligns with your existing beliefs about yourself.
- h) Preserving social standing: Rejection can threaten your social standing or reputation. Defensiveness may arise as a means of preserving your image in the eyes of others. By resisting negative feedback or criticism, you seek to maintain a positive social image.
- i) Triggered: Rejection can trigger reactions, a psychological phenomenon where you resist or react against perceived threats to your freedom or autonomy. Defensiveness may be one way you respond if you perceive that you are being rejected. This might be an attempt to regain control.

Hardness

- a) Self-protection: Rejection is a powerful emotional experience that can create a sense of vulnerability. Emotional hardness may emerge as a way to protect you from the emotional pain of rejection. You may develop a tough exterior to avoid being hurt again.

- b) Fear of vulnerability: Rejection often involves a perceived exposure of your vulnerabilities, leading to feelings of shame or inadequacy. Emotional hardness can serve as a defense against this fear of vulnerability, making it more challenging for others to see or exploit perceived weaknesses.
- c) Avoidance of future pain: Experiencing rejection can create a fear of future emotional pain. Emotional hardness may develop as a preemptive measure to avoid the anticipated pain of rejection. By adopting a hardened demeanor, you may believe you can insulate yourself from future emotional challenges.
- d) Distrust and suspicion: Rejection can erode trust in others and lead to increased suspicion of people's intentions. Emotional hardness may result from a reluctance to trust or open up to others, as you become wary of potential rejection.
- e) Coping with disappointment: Rejection often involves disappointment, and emotional hardness can be a strategy to cope with this disappointment. You may adopt a "toughen up" attitude to minimize the impact of disappointment on your emotional well-being.
- f) Sense of independence: Emotional hardness can be associated with a desire for independence and self-reliance. Rejection may prompt you to develop a self-sufficient mindset, avoiding reliance on others to reduce the risk of being let down.
- g) Control mechanism: Emotional hardness may provide a sense of control over your emotional responses. If you fear losing control over your emotions in the face of rejection, you may adopt a hardened exterior as a way to manage and regulate your emotional experiences.
- h) Fear of attachment: Repeated experiences of rejection can lead to a fear of forming deep emotional attachments. Emotional hardness may be a defense mechanism against forming close connections to minimize the perceived risk of future rejection.
- i) Learned behavior: If you have encountered rejection in the past, you may develop emotional hardness as a learned behavior. Over time, you may associate vulnerability with negative outcomes and, as a result, habitually adopt a more emotionally guarded stance.