

## 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 explains that living in a bridal relationship with Jesus Christ is the key to being healed and delivered from the root of rejection. Cultivating a bridal relationship with the Lord helps transplant you from the soil of rejection to the soil of God's love. This type of relationship with Christ is centered upon spiritual union; experiencing God's love for you expressed in a personal way; conversational intimacy where the Lord shares His heart with you and you share your heart with Him; and knowing the Lord's unwavering commitment to 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 fruit of rejection is listed below.
  - Rebellion
  - Bitterness
  - Escapism
  - Judgmentalism
  - Depression
  - Cynicism
  - Withdrawal
  - Independence
  - Insecurity
  - Distrust
  - Fear
  - Defensiveness
  - Competition
  - Isolation
  - Anger
  - Inferiority
  - Jealousy
  - Hopelessness
  - Hardness
  - Perfectionism
  - Control
- g) 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.
- h) 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.

- i) 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).

### A Bridal Relationship with Christ Delivers You from Rejection

- a) Entering a bridal relationship with Jesus Christ delivered me from a root of rejection. Therefore, I want to talk about living in a bridal relationship with Christ for the next two sessions. I know by personal experience this is the key to being transplanted from the soil of rejection to the soil of God’s love.
- b) When you were born again, you were placed into Christ by God’s doing and united to Christ by faith—a union characterized by identification with Him in His death, burial, resurrection, and righteousness. At the very same time, you were also betrothed to Him.
- c) Paul told the Corinthians, “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2).
- d) Revelation 19:7-9 states, “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’”
- e) Living in a bridal relationship with Christ is not just reserved for heaven. You are meant to have a bridal relationship with Jesus Christ now through the indwelling Spirit.

### What Type of Relationship with Christ Do You Have?

- a) Whether you realize it or not, Jesus Christ is not just your Lord, Savior, King, and Judge. He is also your Bridegroom, and you are His cherished, beloved, and sought-after bride.
- b) When you live in a relationship with *Christ as your Savior*, you realize His abundant grace has been given to you, delivering you from the eternal penalty of sin in hell. You are forever thankful for His blood that has justified you and His righteousness that has been imputed to you. You are eternally grateful that you are declared righteous in His sight because the righteousness of Christ and the penal death of Christ are yours in Him. You now have His absolute righteousness and His substitutionary death credited to your account, so that now there is no condemnation in Jesus Christ.
- c) When you live in a relationship with *Christ as your Lord*, you surrender every part of your life to Him. Your life is characterized by swift obedience to His Word and voice in the fear of the Lord. You become a bondservant who fully obeys Christ’s commandments and His voice.
- d) When you live in a relationship with *Christ as your King*, you become aware of His majesty, dominion, and sovereign rule. You have a revelation of God’s power that is available to advance His kingdom through the gifts of the Spirit. You also realize Jesus Christ is coming back to take over this earth and rule as King over the nations. You become aware of His ever-increasing government without end. As a result, you seek His kingdom wholeheartedly and you live to advance His kingdom.
- e) When you live in a relationship with *Christ as your Judge*, you live in the terrifying reality that everything you think and do, including your motives for doing it, will be exposed and evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ. You live in the awareness that what is done in secret will be brought to the light for all to see. You understand that Jesus Christ will judge His church, including you, before He judges the nations. This puts the fear of the Lord in you, motivating you to repent deeply, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to be transformed into His image and likeness by the indwelling Spirit.

- f) When you live in a relationship with *Christ as your Bridegroom*, your relationship with Him is characterized by experiencing His infinite love for you expressed in a personal way. You have a deep, personal, intimate relationship with Him based upon honest and transparent conversations. You feast upon the Lord's Word and voice, as He speaks kindly to you as His chosen beloved. When you emerge out of the secret place of intimacy, you partner with Him to advance His kingdom with power, wisdom, and revelation.
- g) All believers know Christ as their Savior, fewer know Him as their Lord and King, and even fewer know Him as their Judge. But only a very small remnant know Christ as their Bridegroom and live in a bridal relationship with Him.
- h) The bridal paradigm is not meant to be just a doctrine or theology. You are meant to live in a real, experiential, bridal relationship with Christ right now through the indwelling Spirit.
- i) Your relationship with the Lord in this life is meant to be like two lovers engaged to be married. After all, you are already betrothed to Him. If you ever feel bored in your relationship with Christ, you likely don't have a bridal relationship with Him.
- j) A few important words of caution before proceeding.
  - Most men aren't that interested in a bridal relationship with Christ. It sounds like we must become effeminate. It seems like it is associated with flowers, dresses, and Hallmark movies. Or we have to kiss a Jewish man with a beard while wearing a wedding dress. That has no appeal to most guys.
  - A bridal relationship with Christ has nothing to do with gender. Men are called the bride of Christ and women are called the sons of God. Neither have anything to do with gender. It's all about the nature of a relationship with the Son of God as the bride of Christ and God the Father as sons of God.
  - This is stating the obvious, but a bridal relationship with Christ does not entail anything physical, sensual, or sexual. God forbid the thought!

### God's Eternal Purpose – a Bride for the Son

- a) From the overflow of the Father's passionate love for His Son in eternity past, He determined to provide Him with an equally yoked bride. A beloved whom the Son could pour out upon the passion of His being. A corporate bride made of millions of men and women who, joined together, would love the Son just like the Father.
- b) In this highly specific sense, God the Son was like Adam, having no counterpart or beloved of His own. The eternal Son yearned to be the source of love to a beloved but there was no "helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:18).
- c) This is why the Godhead determined to give the Son a bride. In this relationship, the Son would be the source of love, and His bride would be the recipient and responder. The Son would pour out all the passion of His heart and soul upon her, and in return, His beloved bride would reciprocate His love back to Him, loving Him just like the Father (John 15:9; 17:26).
- d) Paul unveiled this mystery when he wrote, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:31-32, NIV). Marriage is but a foreshadow of God's eternal purpose to give the Son a beloved of His own.
- e) The Lord has woven this eternal purpose into the fabric of Scripture. That's why the Bible starts with a wedding and ends with a wedding! Far beyond being a historical account, far and away more than just a book of law and principles, and infinitely greater than a rote guidebook of wisdom, the Scriptures are the ultimate romance novel between Christ and His church.

- f) This mysterious romance—where believers are betrothed as a bride to Jesus Christ and married to Him for all eternity—is God’s ultimate intention.
- g) Through the finished work of the cross, you are like a pure virgin in His eyes. Your heavenly Bridegroom cherishes, nourishes, and sanctifies you. Jesus is your lover, and you are His beloved. In response to Jesus’ overwhelming love, you are to make yourself ready by allowing the indwelling Spirit to live His life through you.
- h) Make no mistake about it—the Father will provide Jesus with a pure, spotless, holy, and worthy bride who loves Him just like the Father (Eph. 1:4; 5:27). The Father will provide His Son with an equally yoked bride.

### The Divine Romance

- a) The Scriptures are the ultimate romance novel between Jesus Christ and His church. This mysterious romance—where believers are betrothed as a bride to Jesus Christ and married to Him for all eternity—is God’s ultimate intention.
- b) Again, the divine romance between Christ and His church has absolutely nothing to do with physical, sensual, or sexual intimacy. It is a spiritual and emotional intimacy between Christ and His beloved bride.
- c) At its core, the divine romance between Christ and His bride is characterized by love and affection between us and the Lord in spiritual and emotional intimacy.
- d) Let’s look now at key components of the divine romance.

### Emotional Connection and Spiritual Intimacy

- a) The divine romance involves a deep emotional connection between you and the Lord. It’s a friendship with God rooted in the fear of the Lord.
- b) David said in Psalm 25:14, “The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant.”
- c) The Lord whispers His deepest secrets to His beloved friends who fear Him.
- d) The divine romance is centered around a first-love relationship with Jesus Christ. A burning passion for Him characterized by deep desire and affection for Him.
- e) Like Mary of Bethany, you want to do the one thing that is needed—sitting at His feet and listening to His voice. Like David, you desire one thing—to behold His beauty and to meditate in His presence.
- f) The divine romance includes conversational intimacy that fosters a sense of closeness, connection, and oneness.

### Spiritual Beauty

- a) The divine romance is fueled by the hope of beholding the Lord’s beauty. As several verses attest, the Lord is beautiful beyond words in the radiance of His glory and in His lamb-lion nature.
- b) He is the Branch of the Lord who will be displayed in His beauty during the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 4:2). As Isaiah 33:17 states, “Your eyes will see the King in His beauty.”
- c) David wrote, “One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple” (Ps. 27:4).

- d) The Lord is not only beautiful because of the radiance of His glory, but also because of His meekness, humility, love, and sacrificial nature.

### Expression of Affection

- a) The divine romance between you and the Lord involves Him expressing His love to you in personal ways. He enjoys telling you who you are to Him and how He feels about you.
- b) The angel of the Lord told Daniel, “O Daniel, man *greatly beloved*, understand the words that I speak to you” (Dan. 10:11, emphasis mine). The Hebrew word translated “greatly beloved” is *hamad* and it means “desirableness, preciousness, desire, take pleasure in.” Those who pursue a bridal relationship with Christ are greatly beloved to Him.
- c) John the Beloved called himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20). This identification was most likely the result of Jesus communicating to John how much He loved Him.
- d) Hosea 2:14 reveals how the Lord will speak to His end-time Jewish bride. The Lord will bring the Jewish people into the wilderness and “speak kindly to her” (Hos. 2:14). Though a prophecy about the Jewish people at the end of the age, the principle applies to Gentiles as well. The Lord lovingly draws you into a secluded place and speaks to you in a tender way with deep affection.
- e) When the Lord expresses His affection to you, He whispers, “I love you. You are greatly beloved to Me. You are the disciple whom I love.” He encourages you, expresses His care for you, and demonstrates His thoughtfulness to you.

### Conversational Intimacy

- a) The divine romance is centered around conversational intimacy that is deep, transparent, and honest.
- b) Like John the beloved, you lean your ear upon the heart of Jesus and listen to His heartbeat. As you assume this posture, the Lord expresses His feelings, thoughts, and desires to you.
- c) Likewise you express your feelings, thoughts, and desires to Him. This type of communication is essential to building a deep, intimate connection between you and the Lord.
- d) This is why Jesus told the lukewarm Laodiceans, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20).
- e) The Lord also told the overcomers, “I will give you some of the hidden manna” (Rev. 2:17). The hidden manna refers to the manna contained in the ark of the covenant positioned in the holy of holies of Moses’ tabernacle. This alludes to the words that come directly from the Lord’s lips into your heart in a holy-of-holies relationship with Him.

### Passion and Pleasure

- a) David said, “They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and You give them to drink of the river of Your delights” (Psa. 36:8). The NKJV translated this as “the river of Your pleasures.”
- b) In the Song of Solomon, the bride told the Bridegroom, “Your love is better than wine” (Song. 1:2). David essentially expressed the same truth when he said, “Your steadfast love is better than life” (Ps. 63:3, ESV). Experiencing God’s personal love for you is greater than any pleasure this world has to offer. Once you have tasted His love, you are ruined forever. You must experience more of His love.
- c) David said, “In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever” (Psa. 16:11). God, who is a God of pleasure, overflows with pleasure like a river and when you experience His presence, you are filled with joy overflowing and pleasure far greater to any pleasure the world has to offer.

- d) David also said, “Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4).
- e) In the divine romance, the Lord says to you, like He spoke to Israel, “It will no longer be said to you, ‘Forsaken,’ nor to your land will it any longer be said, ‘Desolate’; but you will be called, ‘My delight is in her,’ and your land, ‘Married’; for the LORD delights in you, and to Him your land will be married” (Isa. 62:4).
- f) The Lord, as a Bridegroom, delights in you and sings over you (Zeph. 3:17). Experiencing the pleasure and love the Bridegroom has for you inspires passion in you. Just as the Father loves His beloved Son, you too begin to love Him like the Father with burning desire and passionate pleasure (John 17:26).

### Shared Experiences

- a) In marriage, a date, traveling together, or simply spending quality time with each other contribute to the depth of the relationship. In a similar way, shared experiences and moments with the Lord also enhance your relationship with Him.
- b) Time alone with the Lord in the secret place is crucial to purchasing oil and cultivating a bridal relationship with Him.
- c) The bride in the Song of Songs prayed to the Bridegroom, “Draw me after you and let us run together” (Song 1:4). Intimacy and partnership with the Lord adds fuel to the fire of first love for Jesus.
- d) In Revelation 14:4, those who comprise the first-fruits harvest are “the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” Following the Lamb wherever He goes—saying and doing only what Jesus is saying and doing—cultivates shared experiences and shared moments, enhancing your bridal relationship with Christ.

### Mutual Respect

- a) Fearing the Lord involves respecting the boundaries He has established in His Word. Jesus said if you love Me you will obey Me. If you say you love Jesus but don’t obey Him, you don’t love Him.
- b) God’s love has boundaries, and His Word has defined those boundaries. Respecting and honoring the Lord by faithfully obeying His Word is crucial in the divine romance.
- c) Respecting the Lord’s opinions, preferences, and desires is paramount to living in a bridal relationship with Him.
- d) When you are living in a true bridal relationship with Christ, He also honors your personality, preferences, and desires. If something is important to you, it’s important to Him.

### Faithfulness

- a) The divine romance is held together by commitment, devotion, and faithfulness. This begins with knowing that Jesus Christ is for you and not against you. The Father, in giving His only Son, will freely give you all things. Even if you are unfaithful, the Lord remains faithful because He can’t deny Himself.
- b) In Revelation 17:14, the Lord returns with the called, chosen, and *faithful*. Faithfulness to the Lord is how we overcome and become part of the bride who has made herself ready.
- c) It’s impossible to live in a bridal relationship with the Lord while living for yourself. The divine romance is held together by devotion to the Lord. You are living in partnership with Him, following the Lamb wherever He goes.