



## HELP, I'M STUCK 3

### The Pit of Negativity



→ Are you, by nature, a positive or negative person? Do you lean towards optimism or pessimism? Do you think it is possible to be a pessimist and full of faith?

→ Joyce Meyer (and others) describes the mind as a battlefield. Do you agree? How often do you find yourself deep in that fight? How often do you win?

Negativity is a POTHOLE you can FALL in or a PIT you can LIVE in.

\* ROOT determines FRUIT and it all starts in your THOUGHT-LIFE

\* If the enemy can DOMINATE your THINKING, he can DOMINATE your LIFE.

→ How do people become negative? For you, is it an occasional pothole or a regular pit? How much of an influence does the enemy have on your thinking? How does he do it? Have you seen an example of where the enemy has dominated someone's thinking and made a mess of that area of their lives?

**PREMISE:** It is possible to INADVERTENTLY TRAIN yourself to be NEGATIVE.

→ Discuss!

### DISTORTIONAL THINKING

#### 1. NEGATIVE MENTAL FILTER

\* Picks out the NEGATIVE detail in any situation and DWELLS on it EXCLUSIVELY ... FILTERS OUT any piece of information that is positive or good.

→ Can you give any examples of this in action? What is the healthy alternative to the negative mental filter?

#### 2. DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

\* Persistent tendency to turn NEUTRAL or POSITIVE experiences into NEGATIVE ones ... DISCOUNTS or EXPLAINS AWAY.

→ Can you give any examples of this in action? What is the healthy alternative to disqualifying the positive?

→ Can you think of any other forms of distortional thinking? How about 'All or Nothing Thinking?' or 'Over-Generalisation,' or 'Jumping to Conclusions,' or 'Labelling,' or 'Should statements?'

What you MEDITATE on DEFINES you (Proverbs 23:7 KJV).

What you FILL yourself with will eventually COME OUT. (Matthew 12:34)

If you allow negativity to fill your thought-life, you will produce BITTER and SOUR FRUIT (Matthew 12:35).

### FRUITS OF NEGATIVITY

- |                   |            |                   |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
| a) CRITICISM      | b) ANXIETY | c) INGRATITUDE    |
| d) DISAPPOINTMENT | e) DOUBT   | f) DISCOURAGEMENT |

→ Where do these fruits come from? How do they develop? Why are they damaging?

### HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF THE PIT?

#### 1. FACE it (Psalm 139:23-24)

\* Don't DECEIVE yourself that God is OKAY WITH your negativity and its fruit. (Romans 14:23, Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 1:8-9)

\* REPENTANCE = CHANGE of MIND because you realise you're headed in the WRONG DIRECTION.

→ As you read and pray Psalm 139:23-24 do you sense the Lord showing you anything? Is there any repentance required? If not, then you just need to make sure you keep working on the second and third principle.

#### 2. FILTER it

\* You've just got to start WINNING that BATTLE ... Stop all those negative thoughts SLIPPING through UNCHECKED, unfiltered.

\* Do you TEST and APPROVE or does anything get through?

→ How good are you at taking those thoughts captive (see 2 Cor 10:3-5) before they take root? Would you describe you mind as being resistant to the enemy and submissive to God (or the other way round?) How do you make it strongly resistant to the enemy's negative thought-seeds?

\* Let God TRANSFORM you into a NEW PERSON by CHANGING the WAY you THINK (Romans 12:2 NLT).

\* Don't underestimate the intrinsic, life-changing, mind-renewing power of GOD'S WORD (Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 119:130, James 1:21).

\* Once that WORD FILTER is in place, we'll see everything through a NEW LENS.

→ Describe that new lens.

#### **THE FILTER**

a) What is the ENEMY saying? → REJECT & IGNORE.

b) What are my EMOTIONS saying? TEST & CORRECT.

c) What is GOD saying? RECEIVE & RESPOND.

\* God's LOVE → How does He FEEL about this?

\* God's WORD → What does He SAY about this?

\* God's SPIRIT → Where is He LEADING me here?

→ Are those tests helpful? How do they work in practicality?

#### 3. FILL it (Philippians 4:8, Hebrews 12:1-2, Colossians 3:2)

\* SATURATE your mind with the THINGS OF GOD.

\* MEMORISE those PROMISES.

\* READ & RE-READ those MIRACLE STORIES.

\* FILL that WELL so it OVERFLOWS.

→ As you ponder, are there any negative influences you need to cut off (friendships, entertainment, news programs) OR any positive influences you need to saturate yourself with?

### WRAP-UP

If you have a friend who's really struggling in this area, what advice would you give them in the light of this message?

### THINGS TO DO

To counteract 'disqualifying the positive,' try to actively look for the good in yourself and others.

To counteract 'negative mental filter,' actively seek to rightly discern the good and bad in every situation