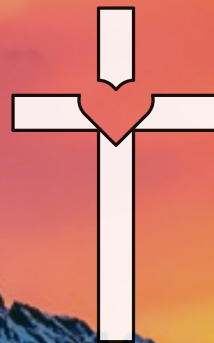


The "Set Free" Academy



**BREAK THE CHAINS THAT BIND YOU
AND TRANSFORM YOUR MIND**



Module 5

TRANSFORMING DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES



Lesson One

The Stories of Joseph, Esther & Job

Read the AMAZING story of Joseph in Genesis 39-50. How did God weave Joseph's story of pain and injustice together for good?

[illegible]

Read the book of Esther to understand more about her powerful story. Explain how God used the pain of losing her parents and the fear and worry of her role as a Jewish Queen to bring good out of the difficult situation Esther was in:

[illegible]

Difficult Circumstances

If God uses the suffering and death of some individuals to bring blessings to others, do you think He is being fair? Why or why not?

What situations can you think of where God has caused something to work for good in your life, even though it was meant for evil? Did you know about His goodness at the time of the event...or was it hindsight that was 20/20 for you?

What was your opinion of the "God's Chisel" video and how did it impact you?

When people go through pain and they're being chiseled at, how might their emotional response reveal their level of belief in Romans 8:28 - that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose? Explain.

What was your opinion of the lyrics in "Blessings" by Laura Story and how did they impact your view on your blessings vs the storms in your life?

A lot of the time the good that God is working out through difficult circumstances results in inner changes of character and faith that makes you more like Christ. In what ways have the suffering and pain you've gone through in your life resulted in inner change?

How does the image of Refiner's Fire, as it pertains to the gold and how it's refined, apply to your life? Do you see yourself as impure gold that's just waiting to be refined to show God's greater purpose? Yes or No? Explain.

What difficult situations are you facing right now that seem to be evil, wrong or unfair? Are you able to see God's goodness at work? Are you able to see that you're being refined in the fire, or do you think it will take the perspective of time to see the results of His goodness and His purpose?

Like Paul, how can you rejoice in the middle of difficult circumstances? How can you praise God even when things aren't going the way you'd like them to?

Scripture

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

2 Cor 10:5

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

Proverbs 4:23

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40:31

"And the lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail."

Isaiah 58:11



How can you have faith and trust God in the middle of the storms in your life? Based on everything you just learned, how can you choose joy, and focus on who God really is?

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.



Lesson Two

Difficult Topics

What keeps someone from bringing up difficult topics? List them here:

Roadblocks to Focused Attention

What are the Roadblocks to Focused Attention? List them here with a few notes about each one:

Which of these 'habits' would you like to break?

How to Give Focused Attention

As a refresher, jot down the 8 characteristics of Focused Attention:

The Reflection Technique

- ♥ Get together with someone with whom you would like to have a conversation.
- ♥ Each of you will choose an issue that is currently upsetting or bothering you that you have not discussed recently. (Instead of going deep into an issue right away, you might want to pick an area of concern where there has not already been a huge conflict. This will allow you to practice the technique without heightened emotions.)
- ♥ Choose the Speaker. (The person speaking should hold a pen or napkin, something to remind both people whose issue is being discussed.)
- ♥ The Speaker tells the Listener about the issue and how they feel about it — not going on for too long. It is helpful if the Speaker uses “I” instead of “You” statements. During this time, the Listener practices Focused Attention.
- ♥ The Listener then asks, **“What is the most important aspect of what you are saying?”** The speaker responds and the Listener again practices Focused Attention..
- ♥ The Listener then asks, **“Is there anything you would like (or if appropriate: like me/like us) to do about what you have just said?”** Again the Listener practices Focused Attention.
- ♥ Finally, The Listener asks, **“Is there anything more that you would like to say?”** The Listener listens, practicing Focused Attention.

This idea was introduced to me by a couple named Nicky & Sila Lee who have a Christian marriage ministry. If you'd like to at some point, you can find more information at: <https://themarriagecourse.org/try/the-marriage-course>

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.



Lesson Three

Idolatry

"Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." 1 Corinthians 10:14

"You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." Exodus 20:3-6

"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

"The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear, nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them!" Psalm 135:15-18



Explain in your own words what these verses tell you about idolatry and how it can affect what we become focused on or addicted to?

What is the answer to overcoming the idolatry of something that is not God?

Addictions

What, if any of these things, have you been "addicted" to in the past? What caused you to break free of the addiction(s)?

What are you still addicted to now? How do you know, and would you like to put God before the addiction? If so, write out your commitment to work on that and we can unpack it more in our coaching sessions.

Based on this information and Paul's example in the letter to the Romans, explain in your own words why people get addicted:

Was there someone in your past that struggled with addiction? How did their addiction affect you?

What do you understand about addiction as far as it being about THEM and not you?

In your own words, explain what you now understand about addiction and how it works in the brain.

The 12-Step Program & Christ

Make notes to help you remember what you can do if you struggle with any addiction:

Focus on God and His Power: Steps 1-3

1. We admitted we were powerless over the addiction—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves (God) could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Be Honest with yourself: Step 4

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Vulnerability and disclosure with others: Step 5

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Humility and submission to God: Steps 6-7

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

The 12-Step Program & Christ

Making Amends: Steps 8-9

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Continue To focus on God: Steps 10-12

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



What does someone need to do in order to begin the healing process?

Why should you refrain from forcing or saving someone who is addicted?

[illegible]



Lesson Four

A Major Upheaval

Explain a time in your life when you had a major upheaval. How did you follow God's leading without knowing where He was leading you? What came out of the situation in the end that helped you see that He had a purpose in it?

The Waiting Game: God's Promises

"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."

Psalm 100:5

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

James 1:17

"Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant."

2 Samuel 7:28

"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him."

Nahum 1:7

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favour and honour; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless."

Psalm 84:11

"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40:31

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."

Isaiah 43:2

"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Deuteronomy 31:8

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Romans 8:32



How do God's promises impact you when you're going through a difficult time, and how can you stand on these promises when a crisis comes into your life?

Believing in the Impossible

When have you thought the "impossible" in your life and what did God do in that impossible situation to bring good out of it or perform a miracle?

If you were in this situation, would you trust God fully that He had a greater plan if He asked you to do something so confusing? How would you respond to this type of request?

Confusion in Tragedy

When have you experienced tragedy in your life and what confusion or questions around what God was doing came up for you in the midst of the tragedy?

What did God bring out of the difficult situation and what was the purpose in it (if you have seen it)? If you have not seen it, what do you feel His purpose might be or how He may bring good out of it?

How to Keep Your Soul Healthy

CRY OUT TO GOD

When have you cried out to God? What was the reason you cried out and what did you experience when you did?

CREATE NEW PATTERNS

When you face a crisis, how can you use the opportunity of creating new patterns to move forward in your life?

FOCUS ON TRUTH

How can you focus on truth in the middle of a crisis and why is it important to not listen to 'untruths' or what 'fools' say?

WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

When you can't control certain things in life, what CAN you focus on?

HOPE IN EVERY SEASON

How can you have hope in EVERY season?

KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:4-9

“Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind and waves, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

Matthew 14:25-31



Why is keeping your eyes on Jesus SO IMPORTANT in a crisis?

[illegible]



Lesson Five

Lack of Closure

What is the Zeigarnik Effect in relation to the desire to have closure in situations and relationships?

The 8 Fs to Forward Movement

FREE WILL

How does Free Will or the power of Choice allow you to move forward in a situation where you're unable to get closure from another person?

FRIENDS

How does choosing a solid support system of friends or other trusted people in your life, help you move forward in a situation where you can't get closure?

FUN

How does having Fun or being Joyful in the Lord allow you to move forward in a situation where you can't get closure from another person?

FOLLOW

As you follow God and think about what His purpose is for you, how can you live into that purpose even more to allow you to have forward movement in a situation where you can't get closure?

FORGIVE

How does Forgiveness or Praying for those who hurt help you move forward when you're not able to get closure from another person?

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.



Lesson Six

FAITH

How does Faith in God or being open for His transformation help you move forward when you can't get closure from another person?

Steps to Writing Out Your Goodbye

FINAL LETTER

Step 1: Write down all the things you forgive that person for (ex: I forgive you for not getting back to me"). Know that you can feel free to write down as much as you wish.

Step 2: Write down anything you want to make amends for (ex: I apologize for making a choice that affected both of us and not giving you more of a say).

Step 3: Write down anything that you wished you could've said or currently want to say (ex: I hope you still respect me and think of our good times fondly). You might choose to include words of prayer, good thoughts, the fact that you are letting go, etc.

Step 4: End the letter with "Goodbye" - and mean it. This means goodbye to that relationship as it was, not necessarily to reconciliation in the future, when both parties are healthy and in a different head/heart-space.

Step 5: Read it out loud, either to yourself, as if you were reading it to the person, or to a trusted friend/confidant.

Step 6: Delete the letter or rip it up as soon as you are done reading it. This will prevent you from going back and reading it over and over, which can be tempting. Once it's written and destroyed, you are better prepared to move forward. It still might be difficult at first, however this will give you a sense of freedom. When you forgive, wish them the best and let go. This honours God and creates freedom within you.

Dear: _____

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 25 horizontal lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, and bottom) for letter formation.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

FREEDOM

Don't get caught up in "Shoulda, Coulda, Woulda"

Stop Ruminating

Reflect on the Lessons Learned

Choose Healthy Habits

Be Open to New Possibilities

Don't Hold on when God Wants You to Let Go

Focus on God's Greater Plan

Put Yourself First

Don't Look Back

How do the above aspects to having Freedom help you let go and move forward when somebody will not give you closure? Explain.

[illegible]

How do you react when difficulties come into your life? Are you like the farmer, or you catastrophize or get overly excited depending on the circumstance? Explain.

How does this story impact your perspective when you have difficulties coming into your life going forward?

The Serenity Prayer

By: Reinhold Niebuhr

**God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.**

**Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next. Amen.**

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



*Congratulations
on Completing
Module 5*