

Home Study Material – Session One

Unmending the Veil Companion Study

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Day One—Loving God

In today's lesson, you will cover *the* most critical topic in all of Christianity. Beyond salvation, there is only one thing required, loving God. Jesus Himself calls it the first and greatest commandment. And to Martha He said only one thing is needed. *See the verse in the margin.* Why is loving God *the* most important thing? Because everything in your Christian life will be an overflow of that love or lack thereof. If you love Him, your life will work, plain and simple. If you do not love Him, you may work and serve and do and do and do, but still, your life will be unfulfilling. You will often wonder, *Is this really all there is?* I believe this disconnect from God, this distance of heart that many Christians experience is one of the most detrimental secrets in the Body of Christ. Because of embarrassment or guilt, those who feel this distance never admit it before God or man.

“...you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:41-42

If possible, write Matthew 22:37-38 from memory on the following lines. Then check what you have with what God's Word says. It is the first and greatest commandment.

As you look at the verse above, ask yourself, “Who am I in light of what God's Word says?” In the video we considered three types of people who will hear this message: Dos, Don'ts, and Okays. In which category do you fall?

_____ I'm a do – I love the Lord with all I have in me. There is passion of heart, submission of soul, and focus of mind. There may be areas where I am still growing in that love for Him, but consistently, I'm seeking after Him with my whole heart. I have come to a place of complete trust in Him and have received the love He has for me.

_____ I am okay with where I am. I cannot honestly say that I love Him passionately, but for now, I am comfortable in my relationship with God. People who make a big deal about *passionately* loving Jesus make me a bit uncomfortable. (Like anyone will check this blank! But you know who you are.)

_____ I realize that I don't love Him in the way He calls me to in Matthew 22. Maybe that *first love* has faded, or maybe I never fully found passionate love to begin with, but now I'm ready to begin the journey to know Him, love Him, and trust Him.

*In order to begin this journey from a place of honesty,
you must know what is going on inside.*

Look up Hosea 4:6 and fill in the blanks.

“My people are destroyed from _____ of _____.”

This verse is a clear warning, when we lack knowledge, destruction comes. I firmly believe that if we refuse to look at ourselves in light of what God’s Words says, we are headed for our own destruction. Not wrath and punishment by God, but rather what we are supposed to be and do will never become reality.

Belief– Write Hebrews 3:19 on the lines below.

We can equate God’s presence, the place where we get to know Him intimately, as our Promised Land here on this side of heaven. In that case, it would be wise to consider what may hinder us from reaching our Promised Land. Just as it was for the Israelites, in our verse above, unbelief can and does prevent us from entering into the deep and intimate relationship that Jesus wants to have with us. Secretly, many believe that what they are experiencing is really all there is. They don’t believe there is more since they have never experienced it, so they never make the effort to find more. If you are not or never have personally experienced this heart-pounding kind of love as expressed in Matthew 22, then you are missing out on something life altering. You are experiencing lovesickness due to unbelief.

Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

I want to narrow in on the final part of the verse above, “he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” First, you have to *believe* He will reward your effort with His presence. He is our very great reward! If you *believe* He will transform your life, you will allow nothing to hinder you. Second, notice the word “earnestly.” Decide to go “all in” during these next weeks as you complete this study. Compare the verse from Hebrews with the inserted verse from Jeremiah. Notice, the two terms, “earnestly seek” and “seek me with all your heart.” Both require faith forward movement on your part.

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 29:13:14

For you Don’ts and Okays– This is the time to have a “come to Jesus” meeting. Sit with Him and be honest about where you stand with Him regarding this love business. Prior to this meeting, ask yourself the following questions:

Do I even know what it means to be in His presence?

Is His presence something I experience on a daily basis? Does He speak to me?

Have I earnestly sought Him beyond the moment of my salvation? Do I read His Word and spend quiet time with Him regularly?

Do I believe I can really know God intimately? Do I now?

Am I settling for less than what He offers me? Do others seem to have a meaningful relationship with Jesus that has somehow escaped me?

Am I able to say I love Him with all my heart, soul, and mind?

When you come to some solid conclusions, meet with Him in a quiet place and simply begin. Tell Him how you feel deep down inside. Admit to Him things you would never admit to another living soul. You may even choose to use the two verses, Matthew 22:36-38 and 1 John 5:14-15 (from the video) to make your case. Simply give Him an invitation to begin working inside of you, to show you who He really is and how much He loves you.


For you Doy – You may have loved the Lord with more passion in the early days after your salvation, but maybe that love has diminished a bit. In that case, your conversation may be a little different. You may simply need to give Him the invitation to help you love Him as you did at first. We can all use that nudge closer to the Savior.

God knows you through and through anyway, but there is something about this invitation that will allow a new level of communication between you to begin. He will help you see things about your own heart that you never even knew was there.


Do not continue on through the next day's material until you have met with Him and gotten real before Him. This is the first step, getting real.

God was not first in my life. He wasn't even a close second. And first things come first for a reason. As our Creator, He knows what we need. If you do not have this kind of deep, intimate love for God, nothing else will be right – ever! Without loving Him first, you cannot possibly be the wife, mother, friend, or disciple He intends for you to be. You will never fulfill your purpose here on earth and in this generation. Life will feel meaningless and unfulfilling. That was my life, meaningless and unfulfilled.

You cannot imagine what God has in store for you once you begin this



“Search me, O
God, and know
my heart; test
me and know
my anxious
thoughts.”
Psalm 139:23



journey. What you will discover is His endless pursuit, His determination to woo you until you finally begin to receive the love He has for you. The only way I can describe it is that it was like the opening up of heaven and Him pouring His love upon me like soaking rain. In hindsight, it was the pouring out of His love upon me that caused me to fall so helplessly in love with Jesus. That was what I had missed all along, His love.

*“We love
because he first
loved us.”
1 John 4:19*

It finally made sense – why I failed to love Him – I had never received His love for me. I acknowledged that He so loved the world, but that personal, *God so loves Lisa in particular* love had never fully settled into my belief system. Once I received His love individually, I easily loved Him in return.

If you are even close to where I was, feeling some distance from God that others do not seem to experience, then be prepared for Him to step in at your invitation. James 4:8 says we can come near to God and He will come near to us.

Assignment: Meet with God in a quiet place and discuss how you feel in the deepest, most secret place of your heart. Is your love for Him passionate? Does it cause you to offer yourself to Him fully and without restraint? Is He your every thought and focus? Be honest about where you currently are and invite Him to take you deeper with Him. This will be the beginning of the journey of a lifetime.

Focal Passage: *Matthew 22: 37-38 tells us to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul and mind.*

Question: *Who am I in light of this command? Do I love Him passionately?*

Process Summary: *Draw near to God*

Get to know Him by experience

You can do nothing but fall in love Him

Day Two – Set Apart

“They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.” Psalm 107:30

As you begin day two in your home study, you should have had an eye-opening and maybe even uncomfortable look within yourself. If you followed through with your assignment, then you have invited the Lord in to take you to a new place. As we begin this journey, I would like to share an uplifting verse with you. Inserted to the side is a favorite verse of mine. It assures me that He will indeed get me to where I need to be. Even if you currently feel far away, you can be certain His plan is to bring you nearer to Him.

This topic of being in God’s presence should not be confused with God’s ability to be all places at all times. He does say He will never leave nor forsake you. So never am I suggesting that God has left your side. Instead, my suggestion is that we have allowed things in our lives and in our hearts to interfere with His intimate presence, that place where you talk openly to Him and where He speaks to you, that quiet place with Him where you are transformed into Christ’s likeness.

Yesterday, we used an Old Testament concept as the picture of what we, as New Testament believers, can possess. Today, let’s take a look at how He brought His people, Israel, into the Promised Land.

Set yourself apart – Prior to going into the Promised Land:

“Joshua told the people, ‘ _____ yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do _____ things among you.’” Joshua 3:5

Consecrate (sometimes translated as sanctify) is to set apart as dedicated to God.

Are you hoping to see an amazing thing? Are you hoping to hear from God? Then set yourself apart. What are you setting yourself apart from? The world. The influence of the world, the world being those influences outside of the realm of the Kingdom of God, is attempting to destroy those in the church, you included!

Below are a few ways in which you can greatly reduce the impact the world has on you.

- **Commit to a daily quiet time with the Lord. Read your Bible regularly.** Begin a “no excuses” mentality. Allow nothing to come between you and this time. You will likely discover, if you do not begin your day this way, it is easy to allow the day to end without having spent quiet time with Him at all.

“In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.” Psalm 5:3

Did you notice how David mentioned “in the morning” twice? He was clearly on to something. When you begin your day in God’s Word, it has a supernatural way of meeting the needs of the day to come.

The more time you spend with Him and in His Word, the more what you read will guide and direct you. He will begin to speak into your spirit. He will begin to show up in your day in ways you can't even imagine. You have to have faith to believe this when you first begin. It might not be something you experience right away, so keep at it.

As you read, don't just "hunt and peck," as my granny would have said. Be intentional. Have a plan when you read. Where you leave off one day, begin at that same place the next morning. Here are a few suggestions:

- Maintain a normal flow of reading.
 - Begin at the beginning. Decide to read the Bible through.
 - Add this: No matter where else you read, each day, read one chapter of Proverbs. For example, on the 15th of the month, read Proverbs 15, the next day, Proverbs 16, and so on. The wisdom contained in this book will slowly seep into your belief system, and before you know it, you are making better choices based on what God says is wise living, not what the world says.
 - Read through the Psalms.
 - Start in Matthew and read through the New Testament.
 - Try "red letter" reading. Slowly go through all the words of Jesus in the New Testament. Even when the stories seem familiar, reading Jesus' words specifically can take on a new dimension and speak to you in an entirely new way. Rather than your mind defaulting to the assumption that His words are directed toward others, you can feel them focused on you. Be advised, you may need to back up a sentence or two to gain context, but just as it sounds, you will pretty much stick to the red letters. Sometimes, as I read in this way, the realization washes over me – Jesus Himself is speaking to me, teaching me through the Holy Spirit. It's Supernatural!
 - Journal things you learn, things that stand out to you. Simply keep a spiral notebook near your Bible. When something really speaks to you, make a note of it. As you do this, you will begin to see common threads that the Lord is weaving into your heart. I promise, years later you will look back and see your spiritual growth and your deepening relationship with Jesus blossom.
 - Write favorite verses on index cards and keep them handy. (Thanks Beth!) I have stacks of verses that have meant so much to me during specific seasons.

The goal is to always have a place to begin each morning. You will be surprised how He will speak to you as you read this way. Just read, even those days when you "feel" as if you are not getting anything out of it. Commit to read. Seeds are being planted. Remember, this is not a marathon. Read small enough portions that you can study on it and allow the Spirit to speak. If you read more than a few chapters, you will not likely retain anything.

On rare days after a verse or two, I cannot seem to move forward, which tells me that He has something for me to learn in those few verses. So I try to ponder and study on what I read, making sure I understand it, or what He is trying to show me about Himself through it. Other days, I may take in several chapters. Sometimes even, I may not fully understand

*Remember,
this is
not a
marathon.*

what I am reading at all or how it applies to me. In those times, I have to believe that what I am reading is simply not for me in my current season. Then, years later, when the time is right, understanding comes as I read those same verses. The way He will lead and teach each of us may look different. For us all, though, there is one common denominator, we have the need to meet with Him each day through His Word.

In addition to reading God's Word, there are other ways in which to be set apart. Here are a few ideas:

- Watch less TV or at least consider carefully what shows you are watching.
- Listen to Christian radio rather than secular. These lyrics seep into your mind and spirit, drawing you nearer to God. Recently, a radio station I listen to has issued a thirty-day challenge to listen to nothing but Christian music. There are countless callers who have shared their stories of how families and marriages have been transformed – all because they changed what they are allowing into their mind and homes.
- Intentionally set up a time when you can meet with a godly friend to tell her what the Lord is doing in your life and about this new journey you are on.
- Read books that will help you mature and grow in your faith.
- Steer clear of energy-draining or negative friends.
- Don't dwell on negative thoughts. What we think is a choice. While negative thoughts can simply pop into our minds, we get to decide whether to entertain them or ask them to leave. I know of no better means of escorting a negative thought out than to invite positive ones in. Gratitude is one positive state of mind that will not allow negative thoughts to remain. When fighting against negative forces, begin to make a mental list of all the things you are grateful for. As blessed as we are in this nation, we can begin with gratitude for clean, available water. No matter our circumstances, we all have something to be thankful for.
- Stay away from gossip (whether it be you or someone else).
- Attend church.
- Serve at church.

These are just a few ways you can begin the process of renewing your mind.

Since your mind is like a computer, what you put in determines what will drive you. The more of the

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the _____ . Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." NIV

world you allow in, the more negative forces will drive your thoughts and behavior. Conversely, the

more of the things of God you put in, the more your thoughts and actions are transformed, and you begin to produce good fruit. The renewing of your mind comes through God’s Word as you apply it to your life. Basically, it is taking in less of the world and more of the way He thinks. This is how you set yourself apart as dedicated to the Lord.

What commitment will you make during your weeks of our study? Of the two categories, what we put in and what we choose to keep out, in what specific ways are you willing to “set yourself apart”?

This is between you and the Lord. Whatever you decide, remember, the sole purpose is to begin to get His thoughts into your head and to maintain some distance between yourself and the world, not to create rigid rules that can cause you to become discouraged.

Focal Passage: *Joshua 3:5 tells us to consecrate ourselves, set ourselves apart, for the Lord will do amazing things among us.*

Question: *What am I willing to do differently to have more of God and less of the world?*

Something to look forward to: *Consider what is promised – the amazing thing. The life lived out near to God is quite an amazing thing.*

Day Three – God Plus

Determine where you will set your face. Today is a shorter lesson, but one that is vitally important to our journey into God’s intimate presence. If we do not comprehend this one simple fact, we may never fully draw near to Him. Only He can meet our deepest needs. No matter what you believe, it is fact!

*Jeremiah 2:27b
says, “They have
turned their
_____ to me
and not their
_____ yet
when they are in
trouble, they say,
‘Come and save
us’”*

Complete the verse in the margin. Now imagine God sitting on His throne looking out at His bride (you), and what He sees is your back and not your face. Many, if not most women spend their entire Christian walk looking at the world to fill them rather than to God. I know I did. There is a simple reason for this – they do not believe God is *enough*. Few would ever dare admit such a thing. But the truth is that most of us regularly have our eyes gazing toward the world and what it offers. Sure, we want God, but we want God plus. God + our family. God + the perfect life. God + a successful career. God + more of _____. Only you can fill in this blank. You know what your + is.

If you had only God, would that be enough? That’s a frightening question. Don’t you secretly fear that if you say He’s *enough* then He might make you prove it? When He truly becomes *enough*, even that question will not have the power over you it once did.

It stands to reason that a face can only be pointing in one direction at one time. You are either looking at God or at the world. If you are looking back and forth, that will only serve to make you dizzy. No wonder the world is filled with confused Christians. It is the rare woman who can say with certainty, “I look to God always.” That is who God intends for you to be, that rare woman. Do you believe that is a possibility? _____ Do you desire to become one of those rare women?

Since getting into His presence is our goal during this study, you will have to honestly determine where you are looking now. Only you can answer that question.

To what or who do you look to get your needs met?

Husband	Children	Home	Career	Social Media
Your Looks	Education	Parents	Money	Perfectionism

Other: _____

While this list is by no means exhaustive, it may serve to get your thoughts going. Here are a few applications of this principle: If your children behave well or are successful in school, you feel people will see you as a good mother (Good enough). If you have countless “friends” or “followers” on social media outlets, you feel liked (Good enough). If you do things perfectly,

everyone will see you as someone who has it all together (Oops, good enough again). If you look thin/beautiful, once again, that makes you feel good enough.

Notice a theme? For women, ours is rarely a pursuit of power. Ours is typically a striving for acceptance and worth. We want to feel valuable. Instead of receiving our value from our position in Christ, which is fully accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6 NKJV), we hope that somehow, someday, the things of this world will make us feel what we desperately need to feel, good enough or of value.

? To whom do you turn when things go wrong/right?

? Do your feelings rise and fall based on the opinion of others?

? If you had more money or possessions, do you think that would make you happier?

? Do you constantly want that “something” and then once you get it, find it was not quite as fulfilling as it promised to be – then you move on to the next thing?

Write your thoughts about any of the above questions here:

The main question you need to answer is this: Is Jesus enough or am I looking to other things or people to fulfill me? Spend time today pondering this question. If you need to, take a few days. Pray and ask Him to show you what you look to for fulfillment and happiness.

Focal Passage: *Jeremiah 2:27 Sadly, we as modern day Christians are as guilty as the Israelites who first heard this message. Just as the unbelieving world does, we look at the things of this world to fulfill us.*

Question: *When God looks at me, does He see my back or my face?*

Summary: *Naturally, we want our needs met, but it is only God who can truly meet them. Everything else gives us false hope and eventually disappoints.*

Day Four - Symptomatic

When we do not love God as He calls us to in Matthew 22, we are lovesick, and along with lovesickness comes a variety of symptoms. Symptoms of lovesickness are expressed through behaviors and attitudes. Many spend their entire Christian walk simply trying to treat symptoms, but that will never make them well. The only treatment for lovesickness is falling in love with Jesus.

Today's work is not as much of an assignment as it is an assessment. Sometimes, we have a symptom that is not quite so bothersome, so it really never captures our attention. It may be easy to overlook.

Maybe if you pray about some of the following things, you will find the Lord will show you that you were well due for a check-up. Before you even begin, remember our determination in the video – this is not a cause for condemnation, but rather you should use this information to help you determine if you are indeed ailing. If you find your name highlighted in several places on this page, you are only going to use that knowledge for the purpose of diagnosis, to see that you need Jesus to step in and be your Healer.

As counter-intuitive as this may seem, these are not things we will be working toward treating because when you begin to draw nearer to God, He will let you know when you need to deal with these issues. His primary concern is to treat your *lovesickness*. Once you are so totally in love with Him that you can hardly contain yourself, and you experience His love for you beyond anything you have ever known, you will see that many, if not most, of your symptoms have gone away quietly and without much of a fuss. From the very moment you begin to seek God and ask Him to help you love Him as He longs for you to, He immediately begins to tinker around inside of you. Sometimes you sense Him working. Other times, He just does God stuff without you even looking. He's like that. Please trust me on this.

Behaviors/Attitudes of concern: And remember, some symptoms may present themselves as good things.

Overly Insecure	Fearful/Anxious	Judgmental of Others
Harsh with Words	Craving Romantic Love	Work and Strive
Addictions of Any Kind	A Gossip	Discontentment
Obsessed w/Children	Shame	Proud/Boastful
Unkindness	Greedy	Selfish
Lack of Faith	Gluttony	Low Integrity
Stealing	Envy	Dishonesty
Idleness	Holding on to Guilt	Ingratitude
Impure Thoughts	Easily Offended	Slow to Forgive

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”
Ezekiel 36:26

First, I want to admit to you, my name is totally smeared all around this page. Some I have struggled with in the past, some I still do. I truly believe I reside in the Promised Land with God. I do walk with Him daily. Still, some things arise out of my flesh and take me by surprise. When that happens, I know there is something off-balance going on in my spiritual life. If discontentment rears its ugly head, then I know I am seeking fulfillment from something the world offers. In that case, I go straight to God with it. I ask Him straight out, "What is going on inside of me, making me feel this way?" Always, He provides the answers I need. Not once has He let me down.

For most of us, many of the symptoms listed above could describe us at one time or another. When dealing with any of the symptoms listed, the questions you have to ask are these: Does it prevent me from knowing the freedom that Christ offers? Does it hinder my walk with the Lord? Does it keep me from God? Do I hurt others with this behavior?

Turn to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. This is a familiar verse to most. So let's do something a little different. On the lines below, write what *love is/does* vs. what *love isn't/doesn't*.

Love is/does: _____

Love isn't/doesn't: _____

As you read through this list of is and isn'ts, does and doesn'ts, you see most of the items listed as symptoms are opposite to what God's Word says love *is* and most fall right in line with what love *isn't*. In that case, if you are riddled with symptoms, you are lacking in love. Rather than find verses to prove a few items on our list are indicative of being out of step with God, the Lord led me to this one verse which sums up the point fairly precisely. It is an all-encompassing verse that speaks to most symptoms.

Since we have decided that we are seeking treatment for the illness of lovesickness rather than the symptoms, then why are we spending so much time on them? For some, looking at the list of symptoms may be the only way they will figure out they are lovesick. Remember our verse from day one? Hosea 4:6 tells us we are destroyed from lack of knowledge, which in turn would mean we are "saved" by knowledge – saved from ourselves, saved from living in a self-imposed exile away from God when He has every desire to draw us near.

The point I am trying to make is this: Do any of these things dominate your life? Do you use the excuse, "That's just the way I am." or maybe even, "I will always be this way"? If so, you have a symptom that should not be ignored. I will go on to say a few difficult things.

- You cannot be walking closely with God and still be consistently nasty to others – including your husband and children. If you tear your husband to shreds one minute and then say a friendly "hi" to sister-so-and-so the next, you have a symptom.
- You cannot put your children above all things without realizing they have become your idol. They are a gift and a tremendous responsibility, but never has God said put them before Him or your husband. There is a reason for this. Children leave. Ask any empty-nester. If you build your world around your children, your world will collapse in their absence. If you build your world

around God, He remains forever. As for the hubby, he'll be around long after the children leave. God intends for you to build your marriage relationship and make it strong and impenetrable.

- You cannot live with constant fear and anxiety and know God intimately. When you truly get to know Him, up close and personal, you realize, He's got this! – whatever *this* is. There is nothing He cannot handle on your behalf. There is no battle He can't win.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18 (NKJV)

Once you know He loves you absolutely and completely, fear is removed, because you know He will allow nothing into your life that was not first filtered through His love for you. This knowledge brings with it a sigh of relief and the ability to trust His plan for you. Remind yourself, *perfect love casts out fear*. It is a verse I repeat in my heart when fear comes against me.

- You cannot have experiential knowledge of Him and still have weak faith, the kind where you are tossed back and forth based on your circumstances. If the consistency of your Christian walk and your faithfulness depend on what is going on in your life, you may not have drawn near enough to Him to get a true glimpse. Maybe you haven't seen Him be BIG in your life. The faith model of one who has seen God would be: When times are good, they are near; when times are bad, they are near. Consistency or lack of can be a strong indicator of your overall level of faith.

Okay, enough said. Aren't we all guilty of many of these things at one time or another? The question comes back to: Is it common for me or occasional? When these things arise in my life, am I immediately convicted and determined to ask the Lord to work with me to remove them?

On day five, your final assignment of the week, you will be asked to list a few of the symptoms, ones that you feel you may struggle with. So for now, on the following page, write out a prayer, asking God to help you see *you* for who *you* really are. First though, see what Scripture says. He knows you through and through. Let Him illuminate your heart. Allow Him to shine His light in your darkest places.

“You have _____, Lord, and you _____.” Psalm 139:1

In every way, the Holy Spirit knows your deepest thoughts and motives. He knows your silent struggles. This is the season to allow Him full access.

My Prayer:

Focal Passage: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7- What love is/isn't...

Question: Are there symptoms hindering my closeness with God?

Conclusion: Only God's love can rid us of our symptoms.

Day Five – Suppression

John 16:13

“However, when He, the _____ of _____, has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

Was yesterday difficult? It is never easy looking within, especially when you uncover some things that make you squirm. Be assured though, the time you invest now in deciding who you are in light of what God’s Word says will allow you to proceed in the spirit of truth. Hiding from the ugliest part of our nature will never last long. Eventually, the truth of who we are will catch up with us, if only in our own hearts. Because I knew who I really was, deep down inside, I could hardly stand the feeling of being a faker, so for a season, I fell away.

As you looked at the list, you may have found yourself rather discouraged because you tend to demonstrate many of the symptoms of lovesickness. Honestly, I displayed most of them at one time during a particular season of my life. Now, I am free from most of them. And trust me, that is not bragging! If not for the transformation in me through God’s Word and through this intimate relationship with Him, I’d still be a hot mess today. He did it all, every single solitary bit of it. I simply began to draw near to Him. Still, when I look back, I am reminded that was my only role in the transformation – my willingness to draw near and to allow Him total access.


Another reminder: We are not looking at this list with the idea that we now have to fix all that ails us. So do not let your hearts be troubled. (Jesus said that.) We are simply taking an honest appraisal of what is going on inside. We will, however, try to come up with a means of lessening the severity of our symptoms.

Think of it this way, if you have an infection, and with it a severe cough, the doctor will not say, “Just take cough medicine.” His first priority will be to give you an antibiotic to treat the infection. But still, he may give you a cough suppressant to make you rest easier, knowing that the antibiotic will eventually make the cough go away. In our case, as we draw near to God, He will treat our lovesickness and eventually our symptoms will begin to fade. But in the meantime, the suppressant may be little things like:


- **Acknowledging the problem** – This may be the most critical step in suppressing the behavior. Example: If you are harsh and critical, admit it to yourself and to God. Stop with the defense, “Well, if people weren’t so stupid.” Yes, I just used the word stupid. You know you think it on occasion. No matter if our criticism seems deserved or warranted, we are called as Christians to be kind and gentle. Just to avoid any level of hypocrisy on my part, I admit that naturally, I have

a critical spirit, and I lean toward perfectionism, in my flesh that is. So I struggle every day with having expectations of others that are unrealistic and my default is to criticize. My prayer is very often for a gentler spirit.

- **Admitting it to a trusted friend** – Having an accountability partner can be a great way to begin to suppress an unhealthy behavior or attitude. For many of the symptoms above, openly discussing them with a friend can help you see it in its true light. There is something about bringing hidden things into the light that offers freedom. Obviously, the key to this is finding that trustworthy friend. Keep in mind that if you have a friend who has shared private things with you about others, you better believe she will share your private matters with other friends. She has her own symptoms to acknowledge. So be wary in this matter. And if your issue is beyond what you can openly share with any human, the Lord Jesus sits each and every day, waiting for you to talk to Him. You can be more honest with Him than with any ordinary friend. He is an extraordinary Friend.
- **Search the Scriptures for verses that speak to your particular symptom** – Begin to replace the lie you believe with the truth of God’s Word. Feelings of insecurity and shame can be fought with the knowledge of what God says about you. Even while you may not *feel* different at first, when you memorize Scripture you are beginning the process of transforming your mind. I know for me personally, one such verse comes to mind. See the verse in the margin. There is something about these words that penetrated my heart. I remember looking at them, and the word *precious* rang over and over in my mind and still does. When something is precious to any of us, don’t we treat it with great care? Don’t we watch over it at all cost? Knowing I was precious to God made me feel tremendously valuable, which in turn altered what I felt about myself. What you need are your own “precious” verses. You need ones that speak into your need.
- **Not being around people who cause you to display these behaviors** – (gossip, addictions, sexual sin, negative friends, etc . . .). As obvious as this seems, we still tend to migrate toward those friends who are the least healthy for us, ones who either encourage or tolerate our symptoms. We feel guilty about letting go of a friendship that has a foundation so old that it pre-dates our new life in Christ. Or sometimes it’s other believers who are the negative influence, and sadly, family members whom we cannot disconnect from. In that case, your only option is to take care when you are with the ones who bring out the worst in you. Pray specifically prior to a family gathering. And if the one who brings out your worst happens to sleep next to you each night, pray before you ever climb out of that shared bed. Prayer works!
- When you want this or that, stop and **give thanks** for specific things in your life. It really is a deterrent to discontentment. I have found that when I want more of anything, it is truly a spiritual issue rather than a physical or mental one. I have all I need and more, in the physical realm. But in the spiritual, there are times when I simply need more of Jesus. My spiritual need tends to manifest itself through physical longing. Now, after understanding this principle, when I



“Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you...”
Isaiah 43:4



have the “I wants,” I turn to God and ask for more of Him. Yes, I understand the concept that when I received the Holy Spirit at the time of my salvation I received all of who Jesus is, but still, there are times when *He* wants to expand my capacity to know Him on a deeper level. And in those times, the Spirit within me is crying out for more. Because of my selfish flesh, I assume this discontentment I feel is something tangible, something physical in nature, so I begin looking around at what might satisfy me – a new house, new clothes, a fresher haircut, remodel whichever room seems most tired. The longer I walk with God, the quicker I see the connection between discontentment and spiritual longing. Each and every time, I simply need more Jesus. We all do.

- Gluttony? Begin to **focus on good health**. That may sound overly simplistic, but the truth is, you only get one body. When it’s worn out, game over. Just like your mind, what you put in is what you can expect to get out of it. The energy you have to serve the Lord in the years to come will be based on the way you take care of your body today. Good health boils down to these basic truths: Eat more of what God provides and less processed foods. Fast from excess (in the spiritual sense of the word “fast”) – eat only how much your body needs, no matter how good it tastes. Move a little – walk, bike, jog, clean house, just do something to move your body.

Keep in mind, if you have symptoms – help is on the way to treat the illness. Be patient with yourself as you begin this journey. You have only one responsibility in this - be willing to draw near and to allow Him total access. That’s it!

Now, the time has come. Which symptoms do you see exhibited in your life?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Based on our strategy to suppress our symptoms while we wait for the Healer to heal us, in what ways might you be willing to suppress your symptom? Since the strategies we covered may not fit your particular need, what other ways might you find to suppress your symptoms?

Today was not only text heavy, it was a day that could bring us heaviness of heart. We cannot allow the enemy to discourage us with those whispers, “You are never going to get it right.” “This is just the way you are.” “You can never change.” “You’re not as good as others.”

What does a liar do but lie? Our enemy has one goal, to keep us as far away from God as he possibly can. So if he can convince you that you will never change, or even that you really don't need to change these behaviors, he will succeed at his goal. Are you gonna let him win?

If you are participating in the group study, you will need to read Chapters 5-9 prior to the next session.

Weekly Recap:

Day One: *Do I love the Lord with all my heart, soul, and mind?*

Day Two: *How will I set myself apart for this season?*

Day Three: *What am I looking to in order to meet my needs?*

Day Four: *Check-up – Am I symptomatic?*

Day Five: *Suppressing the symptoms while Help is on the way.*