

Intimacy When Emotionally Overwhelmed

There are times when we aren't sure if we're being tempted or not. We can't connect with God to find out what he's thinking because of our bad feelings (like frustration or anxiety). The answer is to imagine ourself coming into the arms of Father God anyway.

Here, we remember that God cares about every detail of our life. He knows why we feel this way. But, not even this can stop his perfect destiny for us as Christians. Not the devil, not the past, not the future or even our sin or confusion can cut us off from God.

Have you ever stopped to think that your normal frame of mind usually filters out the fantastic thoughts that God is constantly thinking about you? Here's what God's thinking right now. Everything is going perfectly according to his plan for you to end up in a rich mansion in the perfect society with fun stuff to do all the time. That's heaven.

There is never a moment when you can't stop and let this sink in. God will eventually get rid of everything bad, 100% guaranteed. Everything good that we do is his miracle.

Ironically, we must know that everything is already taken care of so that we can relax enough to make right choices. Look on the next page to see the four ways to handle the devil's lies. These are your thoughts that God won't right whatever's wrong in your life.

At level 1, there's a weed in your garden (mind). Let Father God dig up the bad feelings that are blocking out his point of view. Let his thoughts root you in his acceptance.

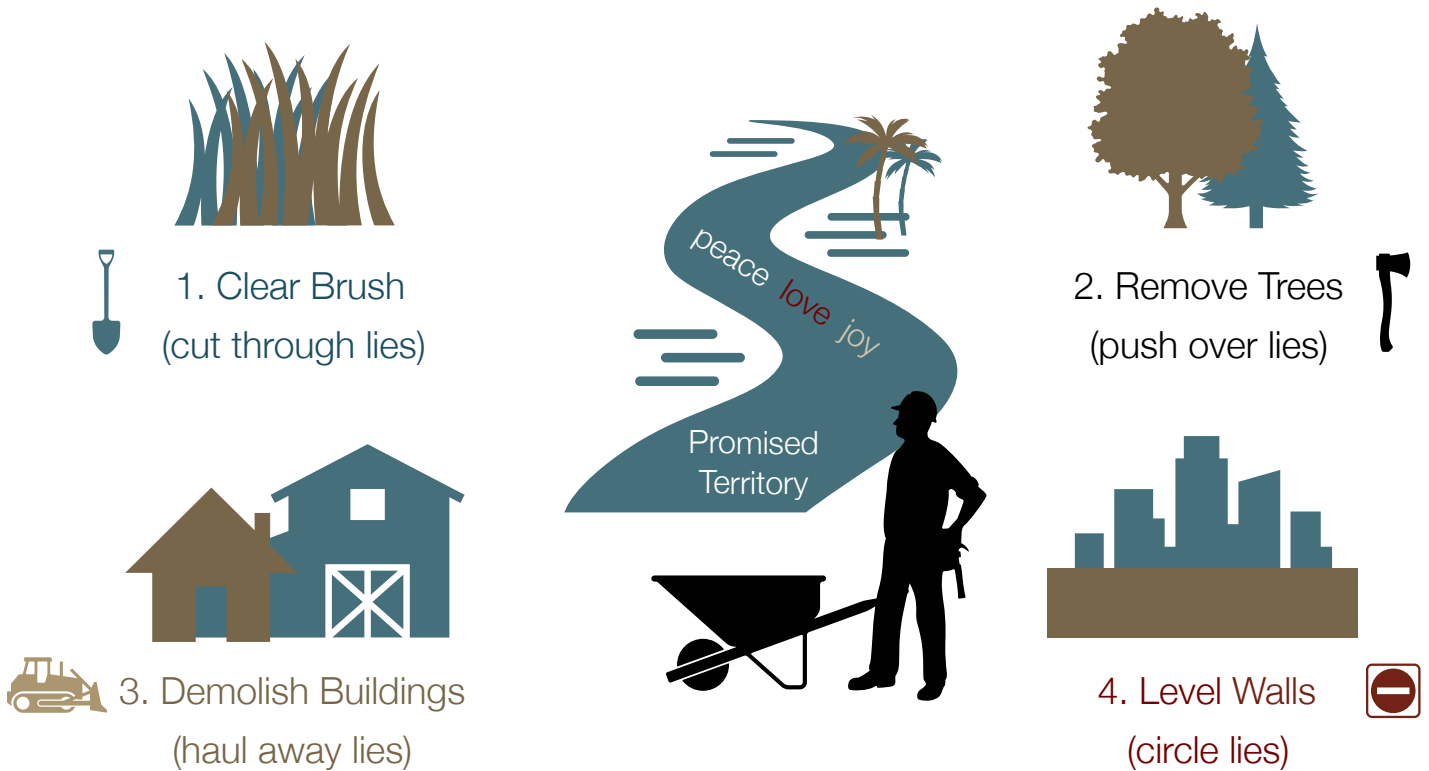
At level 2, there's a deeply-rooted set of lies that you can't just dig up. Read over the scripture verses that he's been using to speak to your heart. Let him expose and remove the fruitless lies that you believe so that worship can flow in your heart again.

At level 3, there are structured misconceptions that were built into your mind by your teachers, your parents, songs, movies, etc. God will tear these down piece by piece.

At level 4, you have been taught to defend your deception with a structured wall of belief. Your culture, denomination, family and friends keep these lies strong. Instead of trying to attack this Jericho wall, let God take you step by step until it crumbles down.



The Intimacy Diagram



Description: Like the Israelites circled Jericho, we can identify the enemy's strongholds in our lives and circle each weak area in prayer. With God's Word, we cut through, push over and haul away the deception from our souls. This clears our emotional territory for occupying our personal promised land of peace, love and joy.

Biblical References: the walls of Jericho fall- Josh 6:14, 15, 20, Heb 11:30

- clearing the branches- Jn 15:2-3
- fruit of love, joy, peace- Gal 5:22
- fruitless tree destroyed- Mat 21:21
- demolish strongholds- 2 Cor 10:4



The Intimacy Strategy: Entering the Land

We can use The Intimacy Strategy to enter God's promised peace, love and joy whenever our worship hits an emotional wall. If you're not feeling connected to God's love when you worship, use one of the following tactics (either alone or with a mentor).

1. **Clear the weeds and brush** by anchoring your emotions in God's caring emotions. Think of the moments in your life when you felt totally content and at peace in him. Ask him to remind you right now that he will turn all of your problems into pure goodness. Use The Security Strategy (page 11) to resist negative thoughts.
2. **Remove fruitless trees** that keep draining your love, joy and peace. Notice the problems (from page 14) that keep blocking your path. Write a letter to God in your journal about the biggest one. Then, let God use the underlined words in your Bible to cut, like a saw, through the devil's half-truths. This will expose the core lie. Let God's truth knock it over, then clear it away by resisting it every time it pops up.
3. **Demolish buildings and strongholds** by noticing any rotten structures of belief that don't fit God's viewpoint. (Examples: atheism, porn, the occult, poverty, etc.) The core beliefs that hold these up are like fruitless trees. Use #2, above, to remove them. Then, let God remove the **walls** (fear of rejection), **doors** (social pressure to go along with the lies) and **rubble** (the leftover skeletons in your closet, like bad music, magazines, books or relationships.) Ask a trusted mentor for help if needed.
4. **Level defensive walls** by forgiving yourself and others. Whenever you feel exposed or vulnerable to being hurt, circle gently around this pressure point by facing the excuses (the smaller lies that hide the core lie). Ask the Lord to give you directions for healing, then watch these walls crumble. (A trained counselor may be needed.)



Notes:

Core lies are the main lies at the center of an emotional wound. (Like, “I’m no good.”) These often come from childhood, when an adult failed to show us God’s love. Abuse and neglect can cloud a child’s perception of God. (S)he feels, deep down inside, that God is angry, hurtful or neglectful. By paying attention to these deceptive feelings, we can let God remind us of the situation when these lies were planted. Whether or not this person realized what they were doing to us, we can admit that [1] what they did was wrong and [2] it hurt us. But, God was never emotionally distant, resentful, rageful, abusive or neglectful. Instead, he wanted us to feel his good parenting. Knowing this, we can forgive that person and go to God, our true Father, for the love that we missed.

In order to forgive someone, we must admit that they were wrong and that it hurt. God doesn’t want people to hurt us, but he can work all of our pain out for our good. We must let him protect us from being hurt again. That means we have to let go of the pain and learn from it. The person who hurt us needs to earn back our trust in small ways before we can trust them in larger areas. Talk to God, the judge, and ask him to forgive the person. Ask him to give you his eyes to love the person that he has created. If the hurt is ongoing, the Holy Spirit may lead you to talk to the person and let them know that what they’re doing is hurtful to you. If they are in your church, Matthew 18:15-17 will show you how to take care of problems with other believers in Christ. If you’re in a family situation under emotional abuse, pray and seek God’s counsel privately from Christian counselors. Any time there is physical or sexual abuse happening, go to the police. (Disclaimer: We are not mental health professionals. Seek appropriate care.)

If you have trouble forgiving someone, remember that God forgave each of us personally for everything wrong in our past, present and future. The torture that he experienced on the cross paid the spiritual debt for the wrongs of every Christian. You may have to choose to forgive someone for one hurt in many different prayer times before your emotions are ready to release built-up anger. Bitter anger can cripple our emotions if we don’t keep choosing forgiveness. We must let God’s crucifixion pay for all other people’s sins against us. (See Matthew 18:21-35.)



If you're a parent, please realize that your children will naturally feel about God the way that they feel toward you. He put you in their lives knowing that you would be an imperfect picture of his love. When you notice yourself repeating your parents' mistakes, he can help you to pause and deeply forgive your parents for what they did wrong. God created parenthood to give you a peek inside his heart. It flows with unconditional joy over you during each moment of your life. Be free to show great joy and tenderness to your children, celebrating them for who they are and launching them into their unique destinies. When they make mistakes or rebel against you, it's not right to use shame or manipulation to correct them. This will veil their true identity and their freedom from wrongness. Instead, firmly enforce reasonable consequences.

“The rod and reproof give wisdom: But a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”

-Proverbs 29:15

Charting your children's consequences will help you to stay firm with a good attitude when you feel frustrated by bad behavior. It's your job to stay positive and encouraging when they show weakness, fear and even anger. You can show your child how to listen to the Holy Spirit through scripture verses about their problems. This will help them to develop healthy emotional patterns. Help them to use their anger to notice and solve their problems. After times of grief and tears, bring your child back to a smile before leaving their presence. They should think of God as smiling and joyful.

If you're a child or young person, please realize that your parents are God's creation just like you are. They try their best to take care of you as well as they know how, but God is your only true, forever Father. He never makes mistakes in loving you. When your parents fail to love you the way that you need to be loved, find that special place where you can go to talk to God. Go there and pour out your heart to him. He always cares much more than anyone else about how you're doing. He wants you to feel his real love more than anything. Use the five strategies in this handbook to connect with him. God will show you a safe way to tell the adults how you feel.



The Roots of Our Emotions

Here are some common root causes of our negative emotions:

Anger: I was hurt and I'm afraid it will happen again. Justice must be served.

Rage: Justice was never served and I believe the problem will continue.

Hatred: I have an unsolved problem with another person who hurt me.

Fear/Anxiety: Something bad could happen if I don't fix my problem.

Grief/Sadness: Something bad happened to me. I need to take some time to heal.

Depression: Bad things keep happening to me and I can't take the time to heal.

Laziness: I am not motivated to accomplish the goals that will improve my life.

Impatience: I am afraid that I will run out of time to meet my goals.

Greed/Selfishness: I don't have enough, so I can't share what I have with others.

Jealousy: What that person has is better than what I have.

The art of worshipping means asking God to make right whatever's wrong when you notice these feelings. **The whole point of faith and trust is believing that [1] God wants total good for you, and [2] he will work everything out for you alongside of you.**

Without this shield against Satan's lies, true worship is almost impossible. The Bible exists to show us that we can trust God with all of the wrongness, everywhere. Whether or not the Holy Spirit shows you how to solve your problem right away, he can take your bad feelings on his cross and return your love, joy and peace. That's why Jesus called him the Comforter (John 14:26-27).

