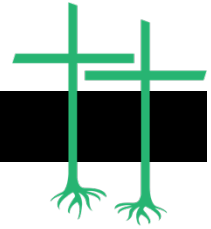


# ROOTS TRANSFORMATION TEAM

## Specialized Issues



### Week 8

*What do we do when people won't let us into their places of deepest pain? How do we help those who are trapped in or defiled by sinful relationships? How do we help people who come from severely dysfunctional homes or other complicated, traumatic histories?*

#### □ Spiritual and Emotional Walls

##### ○ All walls are protecting something.

- Most often, at the core of the structure is the real person.
  - Sometimes the real person is afraid of being seen because they don't believe they're lovable or desirable.
  - Sometimes the real person is protecting their reputation because they don't trust themselves to be an acceptable person.
  - Sometimes the real person is so deeply ashamed of their past sinful activities that they don't even want to see themselves.
  - Sometimes the real person is protecting others because they don't trust themselves to be safe.
  - Sometimes the real person is hiding from a real threat of pain or neglect that would hurt too much if they opened up their heart to the wrong person.
  - Sometimes the walls are encouraged by demons who use them to lock the real person away so they can have more liberty in the person's life.
  - Sometimes the walls encapsulate a person who is so beaten down or spiritually malnourished that they wouldn't know how to escape the walls if they wanted to.
- In some less common situations, a severe trauma has broken off a fragment of a person's heart, and the walls belong entirely to that piece of the person.
  - Such fragments are still part of the real person and need to be reintegrated.
  - When a person is generally open, trusting, and welcoming in most areas of life but has walls in a specific area, there is likely trauma in the past and a heart fragment hiding behind the walls.

- Sometimes this fragment presents itself as a wall, only coming out in situations connected to the past trauma. Thus the person, who is otherwise mature, suddenly behaves as a scared child. Or perhaps the person who is generally at peace and measured in their responses suddenly throws a childish temper tantrum. In these cases, there is sometimes a fragment of the person's heart that is trying to fight off or escape a perceived threat.
- *Later in this teaching, we'll discuss this issue further.*

- **Types of walls:**

- **Masks**

- These people know they're putting on a façade for the sake of hiding their true nature. Such a person believes that if people saw their real self, they wouldn't be loved or received.
    - Those who wear masks often do so in response to past rejection or humiliation. They internalized the rejection as being the result of something wrong with themselves rather than something wrong with those who rejected them.
    - Those who wear masks live under the delusion that the only reason people currently love them is because those people don't truly know them. They don't believe other people are genuinely loving; they only believe their mask is lovable. Thus love is rarely, if ever, felt or believed.

- **Skepticism**

- These people want to let others in, but they only want to do so under the terms of their own extreme vetting process. Others are kept at arm's length until they're deemed safe enough to let in.
    - Those who employ the walls of skepticism have often been hurt by mask-wearers—people who seemed decent on the surface but showed a different side when the relationship grew close. This makes it hard to trust that people are who they present themselves to be.
    - Those who choose skepticism often miss out on healthy, meaningful relationships. They have a difficult time in house church settings because there are too many relationships to analyze at once. They much prefer getting to know one or two people at a time.

▪ **Distance**

- Some people are not interested in letting anyone in. They're not cautious or skeptical with a hope of opening up to someone; they're cold and calloused, exhausted from too many painful relationships to bother trying again.
- Those who employ walls of distance have generally been burned so many times in the past that they no longer trust anyone new. They may be comfortable with a few close people—perhaps a spouse or a best friend—but they're not interested in even trying to open up a new relationship.
- Those who choose distance enjoy the simplicity of not being real with most people. New relationships are easy because they're all superficial.

▪ **Mazes**

- Some people really want to be known, but only by those who truly want to know them. They play hard-to-get, only welcoming the most resilient into real relationship.
- Those who hide in mazes tend to be those whose value was never meaningfully communicated to them in childhood or teen years. At the core of this defense is a question: "Do I matter?"
- Those who hide in mazes generally have high levels of insecurity. They don't believe they have real value until people prove it through their pursuit. Such people will be fiercely loyal to those who valued them enough to chase them, but they can be downright untouchable to those who either never tried or gave up too soon.

▪ **One-way Glass**

- Between the person and another stands a proverbial pane of glass. The person sits in darkness and can see the other, but the other only sees a mirror, unable to discern what lies on the other side.
- These walls create one-way relationships that expect (or sometimes even demand) vulnerability from others while maintaining one's own veiled persona.
- One-way glass is often associated with codependency and unhealthy "mentoring" relationships. This is unfortunately seen far too often in ministry; in fact, many pastors are actually trained to maintain such walls for professional reasons.

- **Graves**

- Those whose walls have become graves often feel distant, dull, fearful, and disconnected. They may have trouble being intimate in marriage, finding real connection in friendship, seeing beauty in creation, finding meaning in art, etc.
- **Most people employ more than one type of wall.**
- **Walls are idols.**
  - We only employ walls because we trust our walls to protect us more than we trust God.
  - When people don't know the Lord, walls are necessary for safety.
  - Asking a person to let down their walls seems scary if they don't know they can trust the Lord. Start by proclaiming a gospel in which God can be seen as trustworthy and safe. In time, the walls will come down.
- **Brute force doesn't bring down walls; prophetic obedience does.**
  - Take a note from the story of Jericho (Joshua 6).
    - The city was a fortress with formidable walls. God instructed the people to march around the city walls once a day for six days, and then on the seventh day, they were to march seven times and then shout and blow trumpets. The people obeyed, the walls crumbled, and God delivered Jericho into the hands of the Israelites.
  - Don't be in a rush. Some things take time. Sometimes multiple ministry sessions are needed.
    - "We have consistently stressed the biblical idea of the whole person, and this certainly includes our minds. There must come a time of reprogramming our thoughts and transforming us through the renewal of our minds. With some Christians, it is possible to go directly to this and help them realize their full potential of life in Christ. But with others, Christian workers need to realize this cannot happen until they are first freed from their emotional hangups. When we tell such damaged persons the only thing wrong with them is 'wrong thinking' or that they should 'stop living in the flesh and claim their rightful life in the Spirit,' all we do is increase their guilt and deepen their despair." (Seamands, David A. *Healing of Memories*. Chariot Victor Publishing, 1985. p.125.)

- Obedience doesn't start with force and then degrade into troubleshooting when force doesn't work. Obedience often looks more like appropriate, measured steps over time.
- Do not try to break into the person's walled-off world. Find ways to surround them with love, and calmly minister as the Lord leads.
- Listen for the Holy Spirit to lead you as you love the person and meet them where they are.
  - You can accomplish quite a lot before the walls come down. Sometimes the time we take with someone *is* the process by which they learn to trust.
- Be consistent in your love. Eventually the walls will come down.
- **Everything you do as you minister either reinforces walls or causes them to crumble.**
  - Be a person who partners with the Lord in bringing down walls, not a person who, in their flesh, reminds the other why they put up the walls in the first place.

#### 📖 Painful Memories

- **There's a difference between being *childlike* and *childish*.**
  - Jesus said to be like children, but He wasn't inviting us to be immature.
    - **Matthew 18:2–4** – He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. <sup>3</sup> And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
    - **1 Corinthians 3:1–3** – Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?
  - Painful experiences during childhood can sometimes stunt development in other areas of our lives. (See Week 2 notes, pages 31–32).
    - These painful memories often fuel childish immaturity, keeping people from putting childish ways behind them.
      - **1 Corinthians 13:11** – When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I

reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.

- Whenever someone still talks, thinks, or reasons like a child, some part of their heart has yet to receive the gospel.

○ **The *rational* feelings attached to painful memories often become the *irrational* feelings of the present.**

- When we touch someone's wound, they often respond in an outsized way. When a reaction is bigger than the stimulus calls for, we're generally dealing with a wound.
- The irrational outburst generally comes from a rational place. Real fear or pain is present, even if it didn't originate with the present experience.
  - An unhealthy response would be to invalidate the person's feelings due to their irrelevance in the present scenario.
  - A healthy response validates the emotions and asks appropriate questions to better understand.
    - *What was it about what I did that made you so upset?*
    - *What did you feel was happening when I \_\_\_\_?*
    - *Is this something that has only ever come up in this one scenario? Or do you feel like this pain-point gets hit in other situations as well?*
    - *What seems to be the underlying fear or concern here?*
  - During a ministry session, occasionally the discussion of a memory will ignite present emotions.
    - This is not a bad thing and often aids the healing process as God speaks to the person within the experience of those emotions, teaching them that there is a way out whenever they commune with the Lord.
    - "[Dr. Wilder] Penfield went on to show that because of this capability to relive experiences, we humans can function on two psychological levels at the same time. We can be conscious of living in our present surroundings now and, at the same time, so vividly be reliving a previous experience that we feel as if we are living in the past. This is why memories have such power over us and furnish us with so many of the concepts and feelings of our present experiences. We not only remember what we felt, but we tend to feel the same way now." (Seamands, David A. *Healing of Memories*. Chariot Victor Publishing, 1985. p.125.)

- Dr. Penfield's studies of neurology found that our brains don't only record the details of events but also the emotions we feel during those events. Thus memory becomes less about recall or re-picturing and is instead a re-living of an experience.
- **An encounter with the Lord is necessary to bring freedom.**
  - We don't technically heal memories; we invite Jesus to illuminate those memories with truth and remove the lies that were believed.
    - "Our memories themselves do not need to be healed, since they are merely the containers of information. Rather, it is the false interpretations contained in our memories that need to be healed or corrected." (Smith, Edward M. *Healing Life's Deepest Hurts: Let the Light of Christ Dispel the Darkness in Your Soul*. Regal Books, 2002. p.69.)
  - Since the lie was communicated experientially (not intellectually), the truth must also be communicated experientially (not merely intellectually).
    - "[People] cannot change experience with data; we can change experience only with experience." (Smith, Edward M. *Healing Life's Deepest Hurts: Let the Light of Christ Dispel the Darkness in Your Soul*. Regal Books, 2002. p.69.)
  - See **Ministry Tool #10: Presenting Jesus**.

#### □ Sinful Relationships

- **Since humans are not merely physical beings, human relationships are not merely exclusive to the natural realm. Real spiritual bonds exist that connect us to others.**
  - **Joshua 7:1** – But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel.
  - **Nehemiah 9:2** – Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors.
  - **Isaiah 6:5** – "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."
  - **1 Corinthians 6:15–20** – Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in



body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” <sup>17</sup> But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

- **1 Corinthians 7:14** – For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:3–8** – It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, <sup>5</sup> not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.
- In the Scriptures listed above (among others), we see that sinful relational ties tend to bring us under the weight of shared guilt while righteous relational ties tend to benefit those who participate.
- **Sometimes, when we retain the sins of the past through unforgiveness or a lack of repentance in the way we think, the relational bonds associated with those sins are never severed and continue to affect us. Some people call these “soul ties.”**
  - “Because this may be a new term to you, let’s discuss it briefly. An ungodly soul tie is any illicit relationship, often in which one person puts another into unclean or inappropriate control or bondage. Often biblical fraud is involved, where someone promises something they cannot righteously fulfill. Godly soul ties are God’s provision for healthy nurturing and relationships (e.g., David and Jonathan as friends, the marriage relationship, parents and children, etc.).  
“The measure is *legitimacy*, not *intensity*. In legitimate relationships we learn to *bond*—to be emotionally vulnerable and physically intimate (in ways

appropriate to the relationship). When the relationship is illegitimate, we do not bond; we are *bound* and we are emotionally and physically abused. Sometimes a legitimate relationship is distorted into illegitimacy (e.g., ‘if my children loved and honored me, they wouldn’t move out of town’).

“Sexual sin causes soul ties. Scripture tells us that we ‘become one’ with each such person. Our hearts become shattered and divided. Memories torment and haunt us, and demonic, sexual and lust problems dog our steps toward purity. When we repent of such past fornication and adultery, bless the others, sever the ungodly soul ties, break covenants and release them to be godly wives or husbands to their present mates, we clean the slate and have the ability to reclaim a whole heart to present to our present or future mate.” (Reese, Andy. *Freedom Tools for Overcoming Life’s Tough Problems*. Chosen Books, 2008. pp.180–181.)

○ **Examples of ungodly soul ties include:**

- “family issues of dominance, dysfunction or illegitimate dependency (e.g., maternal domination or control of grown children);
- “abuse of free will and domination (e.g., overcontrol of children by parents or domination by the husband or the wife, or by a person in authority), allowing a sense of control even if the person is miles away;
- “unhealthy interrelationships, wherein one person controls another by their moods, threats, etc.;
- “illegitimate sexual partners (both pre-marriage and during), shattering the heart and dissipating the spirit (including illicit relations between married partners);
- “sexual hurt, abuse and rejection, creating a fear and control soul tie between the abuser and the victim even years after the event.”

(Reese, Andy. *Freedom Tools for Overcoming Life’s Tough Problems*. Chosen Books, 2008. pp.181–182.)

○ **Jesus has granted authority to His followers to form and destroy relational connections.**

- **Matthew 18:15–20** – “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. <sup>16</sup> But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ <sup>17</sup> If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup> “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

- Binding and loosing are here mentioned in the context of human relationships—specifically determining whether someone is attached to the church.
- Notice: This passage is not about spiritual warfare!
  - This is not about binding demons or loosing the Holy Spirit (He isn’t stuck).
  - In context, this is about dealing with sin in your church.
- **Re-thinking definitions:**
  - To “**bind**” (Greek: δέω / *deō*) means to constrain, connect, or bind together. It also means to knit, tie, or wind.
    - It’s the word used in Acts 20:22, where Paul says, “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there . . .” (NKJV). The NIV renders this text, “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.”
      - Here “bound” refers to a spiritual connection with the Holy Spirit that influences current behavior.
    - When we are bound to someone, the relational ties cause us to be influenced by that person (for better or worse) until the ties are cut.
      - Think of a three-legged race.
  - To “**loose**” (Greek: λύω / *luō*) means to dissolve, disintegrate, and destroy.
    - It’s the word used in 2 Peter 3:10, which says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.”
      - Here the word refers to destruction and a complete undoing of everything that is presently held together.
    - This is the same word Jesus used for untying a donkey and her colt (Matthew 21:2; Mark 11:2; and Luke 19:30).

- In this case, the donkey is liberated from its constraints.
- Notice how the words “bind” and “loose” are used in this passage:
  - **Luke 13:15–16** – The Lord answered him, “You hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie [*luo*] his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it? <sup>16</sup> Then should not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound [*deo*] these eighteen years, be loosed [*luo*] from this bondage on the Sabbath?” (MEV)
- **The passage in Matthew 18 is about binding and loosing (joining and breaking) human relationships in the church.**
  - The power to bind and loose was given to Peter in Matthew 16:18, in which Jesus also mentioned giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven.
    - Because of Peter’s revelation of Jesus’ identity, Jesus granted Peter the authority to decide who is “in” and who is “out” of the church.
  - In Matthew 18:18, we see that this same authority belongs to the church as a whole.
    - When the church together agrees that someone is a believer, that person is not only brought into the family of God in an earthly sense; he or she is part of the family of God in a spiritual sense. Whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven.
    - When the church together agrees that someone is *not* a true believer, they are cut off from the safe environment of the family of God. This is not only an earthly reality but a heavenly reality.
  - Since we, the church, have been given the authority to bind and loose relationships in the spiritual realm, it stands to reason that we ought to exercise that authority when needed.
  - See **Ministry Tool 15: Binding and Loosing**.

#### ❏ Severe Trauma and the Broken Heart

- **Understanding the broken heart**
  - **Isaiah 61:1–4** – The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives  
 and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor  
 and the day of vengeance of our God,  
 to comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
 to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
 instead of ashes,  
 the oil of joy  
 instead of mourning,  
 and a garment of praise  
 instead of a spirit of despair.  
 They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
 a planting of the Lord  
 for the display of his splendor.  
<sup>4</sup>They will rebuild the ancient ruins  
 and restore the places long devastated;  
 they will renew the ruined cities  
 that have been devastated for generations.

- In verse 1 above, we see that part of Jesus' mission (and now our shared mission as we co-labor with Him) is to "bind up the brokenhearted."
  - **The word "brokenhearted" here comes from two Hebrew words:**
    - The word for "broken" is "שָׁבַר / šābar / shabar" (pronounced "shaw-vaer").
      - It means "to break in pieces" or "shatter."
      - This is the word used when the men of Sodom tried to "break down" Lot's door (Genesis 19:9), or when a plague of hail battered Egypt (Exodus 9:25), or when the Israelites were instructed not to break any bones of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46). It's the word used when God commands His people to break idols to pieces (Exodus 23:24; 34:13).
    - The word for "hearted" is "לֵב / lēb / lave."
      - It refers to the inner part of a man—the mind, will, heart, and understanding. It pertains to the seat of emotions, passions, appetites, and character.
      - It is most often translated "heart."
  - From this, we learn that those who are "brokenhearted" could be thought of as having a fractured or shattered heart, which affects their emotions, passions, appetites, and character.

- Such fracturing *may* be related to what modern psychology calls “Dissociative Identity Disorder,” but fractured pieces of the heart are not necessarily alter personalities. They may simply be segmented regions of the heart that are walled off from life and are unable to thrive and “be.”

- **Binding up the broken heart**

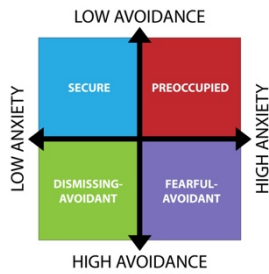
- Knowing what we know about binding and loosing, we can see that “binding up the brokenhearted” can be thought of as reconnecting or reintegrating the fractured pieces of the heart so a person can be whole.
- Broken pieces are stunted at the point of trauma.
  - Suppose a little girl was in a car accident at the age of three. The accident wasn’t her fault—she was only a passenger—but she came to believe a lie that when she isn’t in control, she isn’t safe. Manipulation and control became the walls by which she feels safe.

Now a Christian, she has learned, deep down, that manipulation and control are wrong. Perhaps, with salvation, she has experienced great freedom in that place of surrender to the Lord. But somehow, whenever things feel out of control, she reverts to the behavior of a scared three-year-old, fighting to control through tantrums and emotional manipulation.
  - Sometimes, such a person will even see themselves in these moments as a scared three-year-old.
    - Sometimes, it’s helpful to ask a person how they see themselves when they have such an episode. This can occasionally give clues about the point at which trauma occurred.
- During ministry, occasionally a fragment will surface and interact as though it is a complete personality.
  - Discernment is needed to recognize when something is a demon and when it is a broken piece of the person’s own heart.
  - If the person is suddenly speaking like a child, it’s okay to interact with them in this state. This is most likely not a demon but a fractured piece of the person’s heart that was stunted at the point of trauma.
    - Many prayer ministers have found that the fractured piece is just like the person was at the time of trauma. For example, if they were not a Christian at that time, then the fractured piece often doesn’t know the Lord. Or if the person’s parent was then living but has since passed, the fractured piece may call out for that parent.

- Speak gently and reassure them of their safety. Then introduce them to Jesus.
  - Ask Jesus to speak truth to the person about the trauma they experienced. You may need to give the person questions to ask the Lord.
    - *“Where were You when this happened to me?”*
    - *“Why didn’t You protect me?”*
    - *“What do You think about what happened to me?”*
    - *“What do You think of me?”*
  - Invite the fragmented piece of the person’s heart to take Jesus’s hand and be reintegrated with their whole self.
    - Ask the adult person to welcome this piece of their heart that has been hiding, and then ask them what they’re sensing.
  - When integration happens, bless the whole and complete person in Jesus’s name, and thank the Lord for binding them into oneness.
- **The above is extremely RARE. In *most* cases, fragments formed through trauma do not behave as entire personalities but are simply walled-off regions of the person’s heart that have been inaccessible.**
  - Perhaps they’re a generally healthy person but cannot open their heart in a romantic relationship.
  - Perhaps they are incredibly intelligent but struggle to read or listen to didactic teaching.
  - Perhaps they deeply love their spouse but struggle to enjoy sex.
- All these and more are often related to past traumas that shattered the heart, and the person erected emotional walls to protect the most tender, hurting pieces.
- **All brokenheartedness is managed the same basic way:**
  - Encounter with the Lord
  - Death to the lies
  - New life from the Holy Spirit
  - Identity found through union with Christ

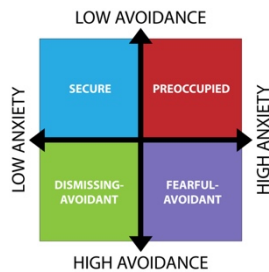






▪ **SECURE** (Low Anxiety, Low Avoidance)

- **This person forms *healthy* relational attachments.** He or she is not anxious about being intimate with people and is comfortable inside of close relationships.
- **Factors:**
  - You trust people
  - You have minimal difficulty being close to people, depending on others, and having others depend on you.
  - You are okay asking for help.
  - You are okay providing help.
- **Are you this person?**
  - Good! Invest yourself in helping others become secure.
- **How to minister to this person:**
  - A secure attachment style does not mean a person is perfectly like Jesus in all ways. It simply means that you will likely have less issues to address regarding relational connections and more work to do regarding other issues.

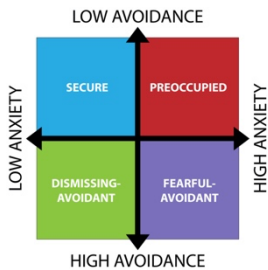


▪ **PREOCCUPIED** (High Anxiety, Low Avoidance)

- **This person forms *unhealthy* relational attachments.** He or she grasps for relationship but feels high levels of anxiety about how other people see them and whether they're performing well enough in their relationships.
- **Identifiers:**
  - You're needy or clingy in the ways you relate to people.
  - You're worried about what people think of you.
  - You regularly feel a need to be closer to people than they are comfortable being with you.
- **Are you this person?**
  - Take time to seek the Father for an experiential understanding of His love.
    - When you believe what the Father says about you—that you are valuable and loved—(1) you don't need to seek out love from others and (2) you believe others when they say you are valuable and loved.
  - Understand that most people don't feel the same need to relate to you that you feel about them. This is nothing personal, so refuse to take it personally (otherwise, it can become a bitter root expectancy that "everyone rejects me" or "no one ever loves me the way I love them").
  - Ask the Lord where you learned the lie that your identity or wellbeing comes from the acceptance of man.
  - In ministry, beware of a tendency to "need to be needed" or to receive a sense of value or importance from ministering or holding some sort of official title. You're already important.
  - Be aware that other preoccupied people will seem like instant best friends with you, but one of you will soon feel exhausted by the other. Also, preoccupied people are most affected by those who exercise high avoidance, so don't take their insecure avoidance as personal rejection.

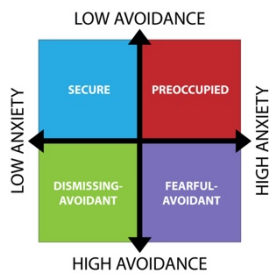
Choose someone who you recognize has a secure attachment style, and ask them to help you process what you're feeling about various relationships in your life. Choose to believe their more objective assessments of your relationships.

- **How to minister to this person:**
  - Help the person feel heard and seen.
  - Don't fall for this person's tendency to self-sabotage relationships. Stand firm in love, and don't waver.
  - Address lies pertaining to the person's value and desirability.



▪ **DISMISSING-AVOIDANT** (Low Anxiety, High Avoidance)

- **This person forms *unhealthy* relational attachments.** He or she is okay with close relationships but does not feel a need for people. They tend to relate to others on their own terms and struggle to see the value in proactively meeting others on their turf.
- **Identifiers**
  - You're highly independent.
  - You take pride in the fact that you don't need anybody.
  - Your involvement in church is more based on activities than relationships.
  - You aren't likely to engage in close relationships.
  - You have a hard time letting yourself be truly loved by other people.
  - Fun outings with others can seem like a chore, unless there's some sort of deep, meaningful conversation to be had.
- **Are you this person?**
  - Purposefully immerse yourself in a Christian setting where you are able to bear others' burdens (i.e. house church). Chose to value others.
  - Get together with others purely for fun and with no "spiritual" objective. Choose to relax.
  - Ask the Lord where you learned the lie that "fun is frivolous" or "independence is safer than dependence."
  - In ministry, be mindful that your tendency to avoid close relationships can be hurtful to others. Deliberately open up to them and make yourself available to those who feel the need for relationship more than you do.
- **How to minister to this person:**
  - Don't believe the lie they are telling themselves—that *you* don't matter. You do. Live like you matter deeply to that person by being present and available for them.
  - Be honest with them about the need you see in their life. Remind them that they need people more than they might think. Talk about the value of healthy relationships in the church.
  - Joke with them, play games with them, remind them that it's okay to have fun. Love them to life.
  - If appropriate, give them plenty of physical affection. Consistent hugs and shoulder-pats build security and help to counteract the lie that "others aren't needed."
  - Do not clamor after such a person for relationship. You'll annoy them.



■ **FEARFUL-AVOIDANT** (High Anxiety, High Avoidance)

- **This person forms *unhealthy* relational attachments.** He or she is difficult to get along with, often due to self-sabotaging behavior. They have a deep need for healthy relationships but tend to push people away, likely because of painful relational experiences in the past.
- **Identifiers:**
  - You are afraid of being rejected and therefore tend to reject other people first—consciously or subconsciously.
  - You create a script in your head in which everyone rejects you, and then you take on the persona of a person who is regularly rejected (bitter root expectancy).
  - You won't accept help from people, nor do you want to feel like you owe anyone anything.
  - You might create opportunities for people to reject you, almost seeming to force them to do so.
  - You have a difficult time forming lasting bonds with others, so interactions with people in your church tend to either be nonexistent, highly superficial, "me-centered," or ugly (self-sabotaging and trying to reinforce your inner narrative of being unwanted).
  - When you do share any problems in your life, it seems to come with an unspoken question of "do you love me?"
  - You tend to openly complain about the ways you've been hurt in past churches and relationships.
  - All the most important relationships in your life tend to be marked with a notable degree of drama.
- **Are you this person?**
  - Only the love of the Father can create the sense of security and wellbeing you seek. He is your Shepherd and your Provider. Learn to rely on Him first.
  - While the body of Christ has a responsibility to love you, the sad fact is that there will inevitably be people who mistreat you or reject you or don't help when you need it. So, it's incumbent upon you to receive your life and wellbeing from the Father.
  - Allow people to help you. If you are in this church, there *is* somebody in your life who wants to help you. So, humble yourself and allow someone to show you love. Let yourself feel whatever love is shown.
  - Ask the Lord where you learned the lie that "intimate relationships are scary and/or dangerous" or that "I'm never going to be able to find people who love me the way I need to be loved."
  - In ministry, it's important to find stability before trying to be an emotional anchor for others, but that's not an excuse to focus entirely inward. Choose to actively love people in a way that creates real emotional risk for yourself. Remember that your value does not come from your usefulness or ministry role. Love, serve, and pray for people as opportunities arise. Meanwhile, pay attention to the situations that trigger your insecurities, and do the hard work of processing them, allowing God to help you crucify unforgiveness and any lies believed.

- **How to minister to this person:**
  - Create an environment in your house church that is saturated with the truth of the gospel and practical love. Try to help the person attend meetings consistently.
  - Be proactive about showing the love of God. This requires you to think purposefully and prayerfully about how you can become a living, breathing revelation of God's heart to this person.
  - Demonstrate that you are trustworthy. Don't go halfway with this person (don't start the process and then give up). Such people have often been rejected so many times that *another* rejection from you will only reinforce the lie they've come to believe about their value.
  - Do not be afraid to explain and enforce boundaries. Such a person needs to learn that your desire for healthy relationship is not a rejection of them. They are capable of having a healthy relationship with you, and they need you to believe in them.
    - You will likely need to explain yourself when enforcing healthy boundaries, helping the person see that this is not you rejecting *them*.
    - Be clear that you want a healthy relationship with them and that they are always welcome and desired within that context.
    - Define the unhealthy behavior that is creating a relational challenge, and help the person see that their behavior is not their identity. You and the person are not enemies; you are on the same team, fighting against a common enemy that threatens the integrity and health of your relationship.
  - Refuse to take personally anything they say or do.
    - Exercise forgiveness quickly.
    - Remind yourself that this person's self-sabotaging behavior is an expression of their past hurts and bitter root expectancies.
    - Keep your flesh crucified, stand firm in the strength of the Spirit, and refuse to become another statistic of drama in the person's life.
    - Trust the Lord to unconditionally love through you.
  - Remember that this person wants (and needs) relationship with you, but they're also afraid of it. Be open, welcoming, and available, but not smothering or demanding.
  - Exercise a lot of patience. Apart from a miracle, it will take time for this person to see themselves the way you and God see them. Stay consistent.

### MINISTRY TOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS LESSON:

- ☐ **MINISTRY TOOL 9:** Appropriate Physical Touch
- ☐ **MINISTRY TOOL 10:** Presenting Jesus
- ☐ **MINISTRY TOOL 15:** Binding and Loosing