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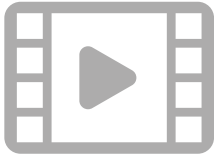
MODULE 4: FREEDOM IN IDENTITY INNER WORTH VS EXTERNAL WORTH

Ladies, welcome back to Love You for Love Junkies. Today we're going to cover the first of the seven steps for breaking the toxic relationship cycle. The habit of identity is the practice of seeking or worth through the reflection of Christ and not the opinions of others.

You know ladies, psychologists say that we gravitate towards people within a 10 point spread of our own IQ. In other words, we're more naturally comfortable around people that share our same realm of intellect. And if we can measure our soul health, I believe the same is true. That we attract people and relationships within a spread or a range of how healthy our soul is. So if you gravitate towards losers like I did, I'm just saying baggage attracts baggage.

If your identity isn't centered in Christ, you will compromise it in some way. For me, I've sucked approval and affirmation and my identity out of relationships. But there are so many other places where we can store our identity. We can put it in our awards, our acquisitions, we can put it in the accomplishments that we hold and also the accomplishments of our family and our husbands. I mean, those cause us to consider ourselves worthy when people that we love are successful. We can put it in material goods in our accumulations in our assets. There's so many places where we can put our worth. But for me, I put it in relationships.

And so you know, before I found my identity in Christ, I felt like this negative. Now, some of you watching may not even know what a negative is because we don't process film the way we used to anymore. But the image that this negative will create is a beautiful picture. But if it never goes into the dark room, it's never gonna get developed. And if it doesn't get developed, this negative is going to be a reverse image of what the photographer intended for it to be. And that's what happens to us so many times in our life. We don't want to go in the dark room. The Dark Room is a scary place the dark room is dark, it's lonely, and we feel like we're never gonna get out. And some of us get out prematurely. We say, you know, I didn't sign up for this. I don't deserve this. I don't deserve the way my husband's treating me. I don't deserve the way my boyfriend's treating me and so we get out. We bail before God's completed the work that he wanted to finish in us and we say I don't want to be in this dark room. Well, you know what, that's okay. He's gonna let you get out. Because guess what? God allows retakes.



You remember in school when you had your picture taken? It was picture day and you didn't smile? You got a retake! God wants to finish the work that he started in you so he will allow you another opportunity. So if you get out before he's finished what he wants to accomplish in you, you'll get another chance.

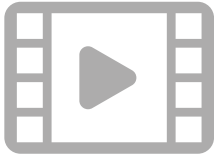
I call them boomerang issues, you know, those issues you toss away because you're like, I don't want to deal with this. I didn't sign up for this. And then bam, here comes again and you're like, again, seriously, I gotta go through this. Again.

Just because God is so faithful. And so often we look at that dark room as a place to despise. But I'm here to tell you a dark room is a biblical principle that even Jesus had to go into a dark place in his life. The Bible says that at the age of 30, when Jesus started his public ministry, and he got baptized in the River Jordan, that immediately a dove descended from heaven, which is the Holy Spirit descending on his life. And then a voice from heaven announced this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. And then guess what happened after that? His ministry didn't take off just like that. The Bible says that God sent Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. God sent him there, God sent Him into the wilderness into the dark room, because that's where he wanted to test him. You see, some of the temptations that we go through in life are God ordained because he wants to prove us genuine.

Would you buy a diamond if it wasn't proved genuine? No, you'd be wearing a piece of carbon on your finger, but a diamond goes through tremendous heat and pressure until the beauty shines forth and then even after all that tremendous heat and pressure that makes it an ordinary lump of carbon turn into a beautiful diamond, it still has to be cut and polished. And so these the seasons of darkness in our life are God ordained.

Another person in the Bible that had a dark room was Joseph. Joseph had a dream at 17. And then immediately, he was taken into the wilderness. He was sold into slavery, and then he was put in prison. But God developed him in that dark room.

Another person who went through a dark room in his life was David. David was anointed king at 13 as a ruddy ole teenager. He was the youngest in his family. Unusually, the eldest got the opportunity for the double portion. But David was anointed, but he wasn't appointed until he was 30.



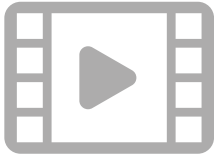
After the Prophet anointed him king, and then he had his claim to fame by killing Goliath. King Saul was so jealous of him that he wanted him dead. Now, that can really be an identity crusher, right there if, if the king of the nation is after your soul, after your body wants you dead, and so David was on the run for years, because King Saul was a threat to him. He wanted him dead. And so how did David renew his mind? I think he had to remember.

I remember that time God anointed me. I remember that promise that God gave me and I can't deny that that's God's stamp of identity on my life. And so instead of believing all the accusations, that people are saying about me, I'm going to trust in the Lord and I'm going to renew my mind .

The Bible says it he wrote all the songs you know, most of the songs started out with him bawling his head off to the Lord. He was weeping before the Lord but somewhere between the beginning of the chapter of the Psalms somewhere in between there, he renewed his mind because by the end, his soul was alive. He had renewed his hope. His hope was restored, he wasn't crying anymore. So that's one of the ways that we can really, when we're in that dark place in our life, for God is trying to transform our identity, we have to put our faith into action.

Ladies faith by itself—it won't do you any good. Faith, the only way faith is activated is by your actions.

And that's why each of the seven steps for breaking the toxic relationship cycle in this book has a list of action points, because we can't just memorize Scripture. We have to apply that scripture truth to our life. It's like having your own soul health coach. There's exercises in here, where you after you've taken the quizzes online where you can identify where your areas of vulnerability are and in chapter five, you'll be instructed on how to do that. But after you've identified where your areas of vulnerability are, then you can say these are the areas I want to strengthen. I want to fortify these are the action steps I want to focus on during this series. I'm not going to tell you to try to fix everything all at once. It doesn't work that way. Pick one or two goals that are obtainable for you. So when you obtain it, you feel like you've accomplished something that you're encouraged and you feel like you could do it the next time.

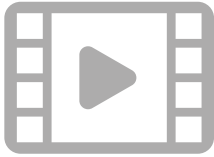


And so another person in the Bible that went through a dark season was Jacob. But first I wanted to tell you a story about my dad. My dad was a photographer in World War II. Growing up my dad had a darkroom in the garage in our house, and he would you know, he would take the negatives and he would go in the dark room and nobody could go in the dark room. If light got in the dark room while the picture was developing, it would be under processed. I know Nicole, you probably know this as a photographer. That it's the dark room that develops a negative into a beautiful picture.

But what Satan says you know, this negative... the dark areas actually appear light on here, and the light areas appear dark. And that's what the enemy does in our life. He tries to convince you that the areas of light that God wants to use are actually places of darkness that are worthless. And so it convinces us from a very early age because Satan knows the plans that God has for you. He's not a dummy and he can see that you're gifted in a certain area and what your calling is. It's different than someone else and he nails your strengths. He doesn't care about your weaknesses and he will convince you that you know what, you're just a negative. So don't even try. Stay out of that dark room. Man, it's just too hard being a Christian. You know, this is adversity all over the place and he'll convince you to get out of the dark room.

Jacob in the Bible...he started out as a deceiver. That's what his name means. Jacob was a twin, and his twin was named Esau and even from birth, Jacob tried to grab his brother's heel. And that's what that's what Jacob actually means is a heel grabber or a deceiver. And that character trait lasted through most of his life. In fact, when his father was old, and getting ready to pronounce the blessing over his children, the blessing went to the firstborn. And the first one got a double portion of all of his father's estate. So it was a big deal but Jacob deceived his brother out of his birthright. Well, when Esau found out what he did, he was not happy. In fact, he was so mad, he wanted to kill his brother. I mean, these are the people in the Bible that we get our life lessons from. I mean, have you ever been so angry? You want to kill somebody? You know, because anger can consume us. And so Jacob's brother wanted him dead. And his deception actually backfired on him because now his mother came to him and said, I'm sorry, son. You're my favorite son. I love you with all my heart but you got to get out of dodge.

Your brother wants you dead! You gotta go live with Lavon my brother. You'll be safe there. So Jacob had to enter the witness protection program. And he never saw his mother again.

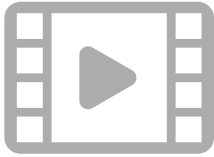


Jacob goes to his uncle's land to live and, and he falls in love with Rachel. Now the Bible says... I'm not an advocate for love at first sight, but it's in the Bible. I'm just saying. He falls in love with Rachel the first time he saw the Bible says he, he saw Rachel and immediately he kissed her and began to weep. Has just some kind of love at first sight. And so he didn't have any inheritance yet, because his father had passed away so he had nothing of value to offer her father as a dowry, because back in the day you had to pay the father who had to give a present a dowry to the father to pay for the loss of the income that he was not going to have from his daughter anymore. And so he has nothing to offer, but he wants Rachel.

So after seven years of working for Lavon, Jacob thought he was finally going to get his wife but in that day, it was customary to give the eldest daughter in marriage first but Lavon didn't tell Jacob this. So again, the wrong girl on his wedding night and the next morning, I'm serious, it must have been really dark in that tent because the dude didn't notice till morning. He realized that I've been deceived. You gave me the wrong woman. He had to work another seven years. But the Bible says that, that the Lord prospered Jacob, his flocks and herds increased and in one day the Lord spoke to him and he said, Jacob, it's time for you to move back home. And so in great fear and distress because the last time he was at home, Esau wanted him dead. So as the Lord ever given you a word that brought you great fear and distress, but you knew you had to obey?

It wasn't a word that seemed like it was going to be easy, but Jacob knew we had to move back home, but he was freaking out. And so the Bible says he prepared a bunch of gifts to go ahead of him, you know, to entreat his brother and then he sent all of his herds in front of him and his family ahead of him and his wives and his children and his servants ahead of him. And then the Bible says that they all crossed over. And in Genesis 32:24, so Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.

This is such a short verse but there's so much wisdom in this. Because often in those times in our life, where it seems like everyone's gone ahead of you, maybe your husband divorced you because he had an affair or maybe your boyfriend left you or maybe you're single and all of your friends are getting married and you're wondering, When's it my turn? But everybody he knew it going on ahead of him. And he found himself in a place where he was wrestling with a man. And really, it's the angel of the Lord. He's wrestling with God.



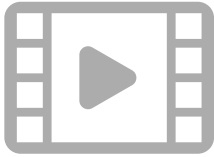
Have you ever wrestled with God? And the Bible says he wrestled with him in the dark until the day broke. And sometimes ladies, that's exactly where God wants us in. That dark room in that place where we wrestle with God. And I'm here to tell you that God does that on purpose. He does it on purpose, but it's for a season there's an end to that. It's not forever, but an encounter with God usually finds us left alone wrestling in the dark, until the day breaks.

Do you remember what happened at the end of Jacob's struggle? The man touched the socket of Jacob's hip, so that his hip was wrenched. The Hebrew word for wrenched means to tear away. You see when we get to the end of ourselves, and we wrestle with God, the final outcome is that he touches us and we become different because in the process, he removes the part of our flesh that doesn't belong. He removes the part of the flesh that gets in the way of who we're supposed to be. The angel of God altered Jacob's stride, he changed his walk permanently and then he gave him a new name. You see, when God changes our identity, we get a new name. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. So Jacob walked away with a new identity. His name was changed. His character was changed. He was a new man.

Can you imagine the conversations Jacob must have had when people saw him. Like they saw his peculiar walk and they're like, What happened to you? And he said, Oh, I used to walk this way. But now I have a different walk because God touched me. My walk was changed. No longer am I an ambitious deceiver. But I have struggled and overcome. I'm a different man today. That's why my walk is different.

And ladies, that's how people will see you. When you allow God to develop you in the dark places in your life. He intends for you to become a beautiful picture. He knows what he wants you to look like. He knows what he wants your identity to be. And so he takes us from being a negative, and he transforms us into a beautiful picture. It's amazing to me that God is using a former love junkie that used men like a drug to now teach women how to have a healthy, godly relationship.

I never would have picked John I didn't deserve him. I wouldn't have picked him. My picker was busted. But I'll tell you that story someday, but God takes our identity. And you know, here's one last thing that I want to leave you with. We talk so much in the church about our identity in Christ. But what is that?



When I started writing this chapter, I tried to find the word identity in the Bible and guess what? The word identity is not in the Bible. What we call our identity, the Bible calls our hope, our confidence and our trust. So where is your hope and your confidence and trust? Is it in man? Is it in your accomplishments? Is it in your acquisitions? Is it in your own accomplishments or your husband's or is it in Christ? When we anchor our hope, our confidence and trust in Him, He causes us to be a brand new person. Amen.

Let's pray. God, thank you so much for the work that you began in each lady. I pray Father you give her a revelation of who she is in Christ so that no longer will she gravitate towards counterfeit identities, Father, that she will know who she is because you love her and your word adores her. She is your, your masterpiece. She is your beloved. I thank you for that in Jesus name.