

152 STAIRS TOWARD CONTENTMENT

CHAPTER 3 | TEACHING SEGMENT 2

(PLEASE WATCH THE STORY SEGMENTS CONNECTED TO THIS CHAPTER)

OUTLINE

**GOD'S PRESENCE AND REDEMPTIVE PLAN FOR OUR LIVES EMPOWERS US
TO MOVE BEYOND OUR MISTAKES AND FIND HOPE AND VICTORY**

PREMISE:

- The redemptive plan of God is activated by **GRATITUDE** and **FORGIVENESS**
- Our **MEMORIES** heal through empowering emotions

1. THE REDEMPTIVE POWER OF GOD

A. The biblical story of Naomi and Ruth

- Naomi had to return to her homeland to obtain God's redemptive plan for her life, moving from bitterness and regret to forgiveness.
- Naomi represents the redemption of our mistakes, people we hold grudges against.
- Ruth represents our past and our childhood and early adulthood experiences.
- Naomi had to move back into her past to create a redemptive future, a future that was actually traveling alongside her: Ruth.
- Just as Naomi and Ruth journeyed through the desert, we face our own desert times and the danger of getting stuck there through unforgiveness or hopelessness.

B. Find hope in the journey

- We can also face discouragement from others who define us by our past. But don't stop! Continue the journey toward freedom!
- No decision is permanent; no destination final. We continue to grow; remember that there is always hope.
- No past mistakes can be greater than God's redemptive plan for our lives!

C. Gratitude and forgiveness

- The redemptive plan of God is activated by gratitude and forgiveness.
- Gratitude is like opening the windows of our soul for fresh air to come in with new perspective. Breathe it in!
- Ask yourself: *In the middle of my challenge, what am I still grateful for? What do I have right now, today, that I can express gratitude and appreciation for?*
- Gratefulness is a choice.
- Forgiveness brings new life to our memories as we inhale the gratitude and forgiveness of God.

D. Living in the past tense

- "I should have..." "I would have..." "I could have..." are signs of living in the past tense with a regretful, negative mind. When we live with what we've failed to do, regret gets attached to our memories.
- Ask yourself, *Where have I attached regretful memories improperly?*

2. MEMORIES HEAL THROUGH EMPOWERING EMOTIONS

A. Emotions, pictures, and words

- Emotions travel 80,000 times faster than thought, changing every 90 seconds in connection with our thoughts.
- If you dwell on memories with a negative attachment, your brain registers it as though it is happening now.
- When you meditate on God's Word and adapt it as truth in your life, hopeful and empowering emotions are generated.
- Begin to be accountable for your thoughts; examine them. Replace negative thoughts and pictures with positive images.
- Healing comes through understanding the process: emotion comes first; then pictures are created by them; then words are formed.
- Visualize how you want to feel; that emotion will carry the actions and visualization in your mind.