

LIBERATED FROM INVISIBLE CRUTCHES

CHAPTER 6 | TEACHING SEGMENT 2

(PLEASE WATCH THE STORY SEGMENTS CONNECTED TO THIS CHAPTER)

OUTLINE

JOYFUL FREEDOM AWAITS AS WE RELEASE THE INVISIBLE CRUTCHES THAT HOLD US IN BONDAGE

PREMISE:

- **RELEASE** what is temporarily sustaining you
- **FIND** what will eternally uphold you

1. RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA

A. PTSD research: 9/11 vs. Hurricane Katrina

- Research by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk (see p. 99) reveals that 5% of 9/11 survivors experienced PTSD, while 33% of Katrina survivors suffered from it.
- The media portrayed 9/11 survivors as heroes; it was an attack against our nation, culture, and beliefs. Nation, communities, and families grieved together and were able to go back and revisit their areas of loss, including building a monument to honor the fallen.
- It can't bring back the lives that were lost, but it can strengthen our nation to be able to fight and preserve our freedom and rights.
- While 9/11 survivors were seen as heroes, the media portrayed Katrina survivors as victims; this label became their identity. If we're not careful, we can live with that lifestyle and belief for the rest of our lives.

- Katrina survivors who experienced trauma and loss were not allowed to return to their homes because they were destroyed or because of toxicity. They had to start new lives; there was no closure in the grieving process.
- *Psychology Today* (see p. 100): "...the likelihood of a survivor experiencing PTSD as a result of a trigger event depends not just on the event itself, but on the ensuing circumstances and the cultural reaction to the event."

B. Restoration

- The Samaritan woman brought the community together; they grieved their rejection by the Jews but also celebrated the acceptance that they experienced in meeting the Messiah, the living Lord who now embraced them.
- That is the complete restoration of a culture and mindset.
- God is the only One who can fully redeem us when we come to know His Kingdom and compassion and love.
- He walked among us, sympathized, experienced rejection. He was one of us.

C. Release

- C.S. Lewis: "The only things we can keep are the things we freely give to God."
- Ask yourself: *What am I holding on to that I need to release? Have I put my faith and trust in one memory or person, possessions, money, title, job?*
- It becomes an invisible crutch when it no longer sustains our happiness in life; it becomes an addiction.

2. THE PATH TO FREEDOM

A. Ceitci's story (pp. 97–99)

- After her mom's death, she created scenarios and visualizations to keep calm. Those memories became suffocating because she was living in the past. She ignored the grieving process, trying to press through the anxieties and fears by imagining herself in a safe scenario.

- When we are going through PTSD, we try to attach ourselves to something safe: a memory, a person. But we cannot exchange Jesus for anyone else—He is the only place of safety. If we do, we open the door to these disorders becoming part of our lives.
- She sensed the Holy Spirit speak to her as she was dwelling on the passing of her mom: *How long are you going to hold on to these invisible things without allowing me to enter that room of your heart?*
- She realized they had become bondage in her life. At a Seattle pier, she gathered stones and named each one as she released it into the water—good or bad memories, times of betrayal or success. As the water embraced each stone, the bondage was gone and she instantly felt liberation in her heart.

B. Your story

- Ceitci's challenge and desire for you: identify those areas of life where you are holding on to the training wheels, the invisible crutches, because you're too afraid to embark on the next season of life.
- Write down those areas, then do something tangible with it that creates separation between you and that invisible crutch (burn, flush, or discard the paper). It has to happen in the physical realm because we function in our senses more than in our spirit realm.
- When you experience that physical disconnection, then you can experience the spiritual connection and the love of Christ.
- Imagine how much lighter you can feel. Today is your new day!

TAKE TIME TO THINK AND DISCOVER:

Consider these additional thoughts as you complete the experiential imagery exercise and the personal reflection questions for this chapter:

- It's important to take the time to identify our fears because they create and hold our invisible crutches in our mindset.
- Question #1: *What are you fearing this very moment?* Not last month, but now. *What are the fears that are journeying with you through this entire process?*
- Question #2: Whatever we choose as a value, that's what we focus on. If we continue to hold our invisible crutches as our main value, we can't focus on the new things God has for us, move forward or see the big picture.
- If you are doing these exercises in a group setting, you can discuss the questions with someone safe (not necessarily the entire group), but make sure you also write something.
- Question #3: This one is especially true if we're holding the loss of a loved one in our minds but not allowing ourselves to grieve correctly. As Ceitci walked through this process, she grieved her mom, released her, and allowed herself to experience healing.
- Question #4: Meditate on the wonder of being in the presence of God. Reflect on those memories, write some of them down. Be encouraged as you remember that if God has met you at that time in your life, He can absolutely do it again.

**** PLEASE CONTINUE TO CHAPTER 7 – TEACHING SEGMENT 1**