

YOUR DIET DIVORCED.
HE REMARRIES.

Israel's Divorce Detox

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ISBN:

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For Zion's Sake



Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

Jeremiah 3:8





Detox Control

God is divorced. The God of the Bible, the Holy One of Israel, the Almighty and Everlasting King is divorced. Let that sink in.

God hates divorce. Still, the perfect, omniscient, unchanging, and all powerful creator of the universe is a divorcee. The implications of that realization are profound for me.

First, if God will not make Israel love Him, how much more futile are my own attempts to control others. Further, if God won't force Himself on Israel, He's not going to force my spouse to love me. And, if the God of the universe is lawful in His right to divorce, then, we humans also possess certain rights and responsibilities relative to a marriage contract.

Father, I pray you will grant me the strength to trust you with those I love. Please give me the courage to rest in the realization that you love my family infinitely more than I do. You know them; you are working in their lives. I release my family to you and trust you will guide me to pray for them faithfully.

1. How did you feel when you first understood that God is divorced?
2. Do you ever wish that God would force a person to do something?
3. Why do you think God created and protects free will?
4. Do you ever blame God for your pain (Lamentations 3:33)?
5. Does God have a purpose for pain (1 Peter 1:7)?

“Furthermore it has been said,
‘Whoever divorces his wife,
let him give her a certificate
of divorce.’ But I say to you
that whoever divorces his wife
for any reason except sexual immorality
causes her to commit adultery;
and whoever marries a woman
who is divorced commits adultery.”

Matthew 5:31-32



Detox My Rights

I long for intimacy, sexual fulfillment, comfort, shelter, and companionship. Nevertheless, marital bliss is not my God-given right.

It is a privilege that can be revoked by any number of circumstances such as death and divorce. Or, marital joy can be diminished by factors such as disagreement, disability, or distance.

If I allow my “so-called” rights to distance me from God’s love, I make marriage my idol. I make love my God.

Father, I pray that you would work in me to will and do your good pleasure. I surrender my rights to marriage, or singleness, and seek your perfect plan for my future and entrust to you my past. Thank you Father, that your love is sufficient for me in every situation.

1. What are some “so called” rights that are really privileges from God?
2. How can you know if you idolize love?
3. How do you feel knowing that re-marriage may not be a Biblical option for you?
4. Have you ever wondered how God is able to re-marry Israel after her adultery and His divorce?
5. How can you be certain that God’s love is sufficient in your circumstances?
6. List some practical ways to find joy regardless of marital status or struggles.



“Almighty, Almighty,
the compassionate and gracious
God,
slow to anger,
and abounding
in loyal love
and faithfulness.”

Exodus 34:6



God gets angry. The scriptures say He is angry with the wicked everyday. But, He is slow to anger and long suffering.

Anger is a gift. This powerful emotion signals when something is wrong. I can't afford to ignore anger. But, I won't be controlled by it either. As humans we have valid and invalid reasons for anger. We anger at injustice, anger at deep loss, anger at seemingly senseless chaos and circumstances that should have never been. We also anger at being slighted, rejected, and betrayed like spoiled children, our desires denied.

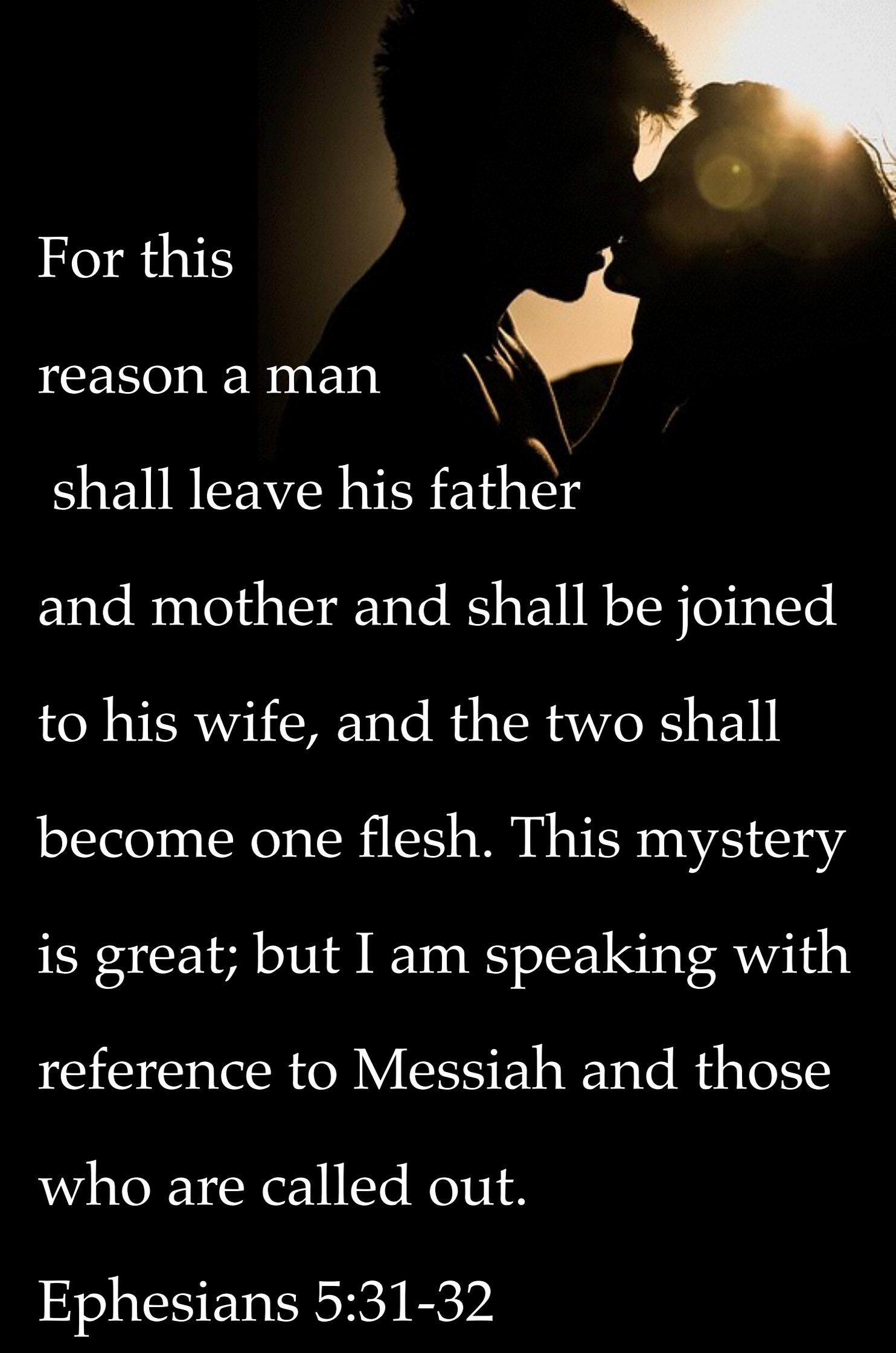
Yet, our Creator challenges us to be angry and do not sin. He invites us never to let the sun go down on our anger lest the poison seep into our souls. He calls us to forgive and bless those who hurt us as the antidote for all anger, even justified and righteous anger.

So, Father, I invite you to search my being for any root of anger. Show me where I need to take action and show me where I can show compassion. Leech anger out of my system. Replace it with forgiveness and blessings for those who injure me. Teach me how to be angry without sinning. Cleanse me and heal me and those who hurt me.

1. How do you know when anger shifts from being a fire alarm to becoming a raging fire?
2. How do you handle anger against yourself (Genesis 45:5)?
3. What do you do when you are angry with God (1 Thessalonians 5:18)?
4. What is your strategy for resolving anger against those who wrong you (Matthew 5:44)?



Detox Anger

A romantic silhouette of a man and a woman kissing at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and a lens flare effect. The couple is in profile, facing each other, with their lips touching. The background is a soft gradient of orange and yellow.

For this
reason a man
shall leave his father
and mother and shall be joined
to his wife, and the two shall
become one flesh. This mystery
is great; but I am speaking with
reference to Messiah and those
who are called out.

Ephesians 5:31-32

Detox the Why

As a homeschooling mom, I grew to like math. The principle is simple; learn the rule, apply the rule. The scriptures contain clear rules for marriage and for divorce. Led by love, I worked to learn the rules and apply the rules because I know the one who rules.

Now, I find myself in a situation that seems to break the rules. I cannot fully grasp why, despite my prayers and diligence, I am facing a divorce. I longed for a marriage that looked like Messiah and His bride. Instead, I find myself in a place of brokenness.

Father, place me in trust that you know best. Work on my behalf. Let me rest in your loyal love. Make your grace sufficient for me.

1. How do you handle your life when circumstances seem unfair and just don't add up?
2. How do you obtain peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:7)?
3. How might a trial of divorce make you more like your Heavenly Father who adores Israel and will, in fact, remarry her? List some eternal advantages of your trial.
4. Read the book of Habakkuk. Then list your questions for God. Sit quietly and thank Him for any answers while trusting His silences.
5. Do you have any trust issues from your past? Your Father may long to bring up those issues so He can clear them out. Find a good counselor or trusted friend to whom you can expose those wounds so they may be healed. Healing is His heart.

That the trial of your trust,
being much more precious
than of gold that perishes,
though it be tried with fire,
might be found unto praise
and honor and glory
at the appearing
of Messiah.

1 Peter 1:7



Detox Doubt

Does God doubt? I doubt it.

God knew how Job would endure suffering and trials. God knew that Abraham would offer up Issac. God knew Noah would build the ark.

God knows He will one day gather the Jewish people in Jerusalem and His children will welcome the return of their King when the Jewish people cry, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

God knows me, and He knows you. In the crucible of our faith, God already knows how we will come through.

Nevertheless, I doubt His goodness. I whine and plead that if He really loved me, He would never allow me to endure such grief of mind and anguish of emotions.

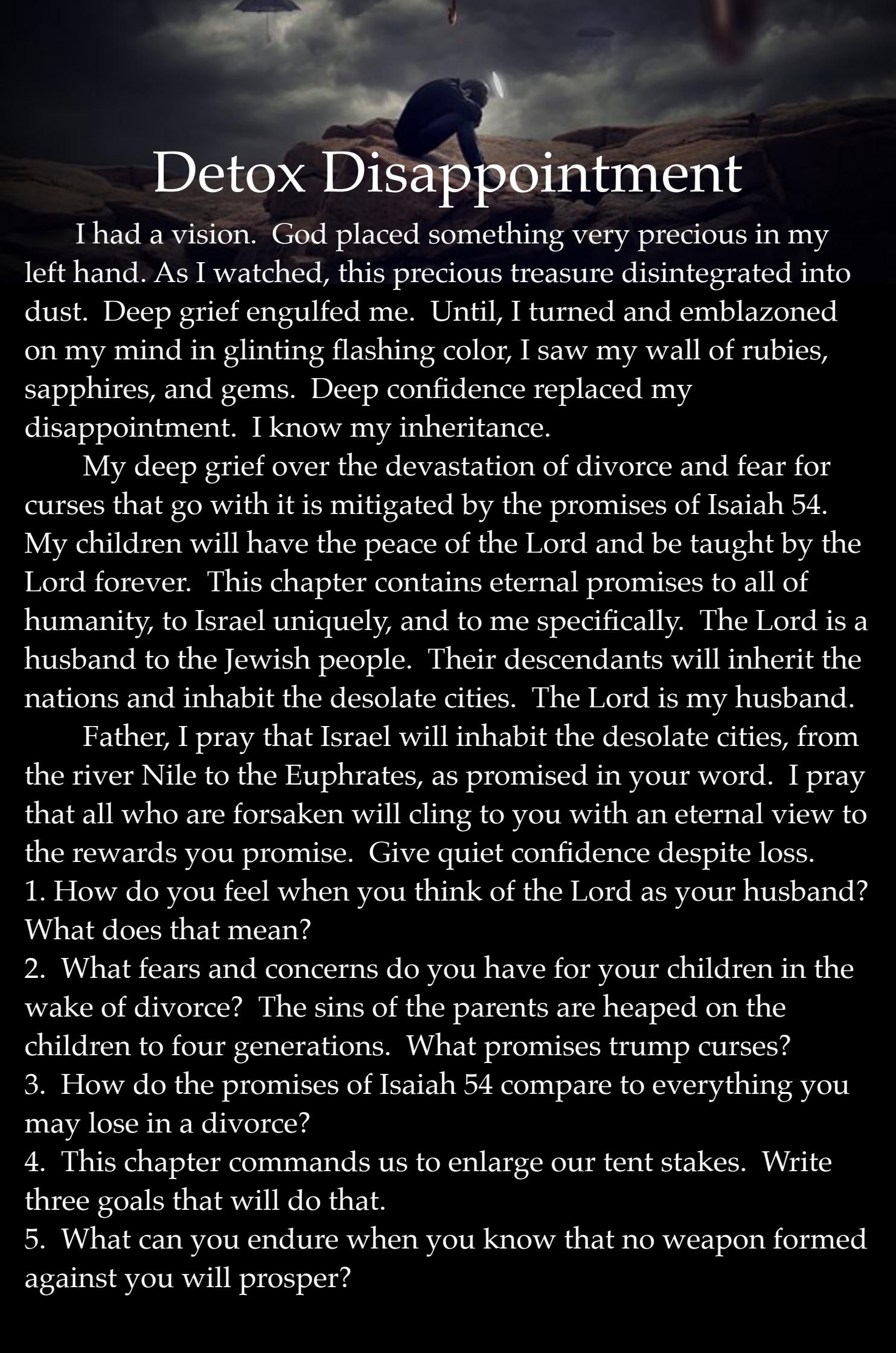
Quietly, He graciously responds to my doubts when He says, "I love you so much. I would rather die than live without you."

1. What are some of your doubts as you detoxify from broken relationships?
2. What action could you take to overcome your doubts (James 1:5, 1 Peter 1:13)?
3. Why do you think the Father is imminently patient and makes provision for those who doubt His son, especially the Jewish people (Zechariah 12:10, John 19:37)?
4. How can you demonstrate patience for your self and others who doubt?
5. The Father has an eternal covenant with the Jewish people. He won't break it with them, so you can trust He won't break faith with you. Take an inventory of your life. List the times God demonstrated His faithfulness? (1 Chronicles 16:15, Psalm 105:8)

“O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your
stones with colorful gems,
And lay your foundations with sapphires.
I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls of precious stones.
All your children shall be taught
by the Lord,
And great shall be
the peace of
your children.

Isaiah 54 11-13



A person is sitting on a rocky shore, looking out at the ocean under a cloudy sky. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a hat. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on the image.

Detox Disappointment

I had a vision. God placed something very precious in my left hand. As I watched, this precious treasure disintegrated into dust. Deep grief engulfed me. Until, I turned and emblazoned on my mind in glinting flashing color, I saw my wall of rubies, sapphires, and gems. Deep confidence replaced my disappointment. I know my inheritance.

My deep grief over the devastation of divorce and fear for curses that go with it is mitigated by the promises of Isaiah 54. My children will have the peace of the Lord and be taught by the Lord forever. This chapter contains eternal promises to all of humanity, to Israel uniquely, and to me specifically. The Lord is a husband to the Jewish people. Their descendants will inherit the nations and inhabit the desolate cities. The Lord is my husband.

Father, I pray that Israel will inhabit the desolate cities, from the river Nile to the Euphrates, as promised in your word. I pray that all who are forsaken will cling to you with an eternal view to the rewards you promise. Give quiet confidence despite loss.

1. How do you feel when you think of the Lord as your husband? What does that mean?
2. What fears and concerns do you have for your children in the wake of divorce? The sins of the parents are heaped on the children to four generations. What promises trump curses?
3. How do the promises of Isaiah 54 compare to everything you may lose in a divorce?
4. This chapter commands us to enlarge our tent stakes. Write three goals that will do that.
5. What can you endure when you know that no weapon formed against you will prosper?

Now therefore, if you will
obey my voice indeed,
and keep my covenant,
then you shall be a peculiar
treasure unto me
above all people;
for all the earth is mine.



Exodus

19:5

Detox Regret

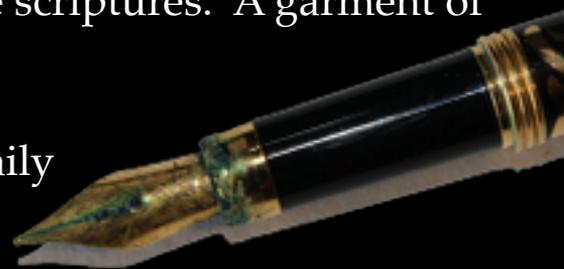
God keeps covenants. God's covenants with Israel are eternal; they will not be broken. He is steadfast. He is loyal love. He is faithful. He is not a man who can lie.

He is deeply grieved by the breaking of covenants. Faithlessness wrenches the soul, threatens our integrity, damages our sense of safety, and erodes the very trust that is so precious to our God. These are some reasons why God hates divorce. Divorce is a broken covenant. Marriage is a lifelong promise, intended to be founded on a rock; divorce is honor vaporized, loyal love flung into the sea.

But, I cannot change my past. I cannot change my prior choices or others'. I can thank Him for everything in my past because my trials shape and mold me and testify to His redemptive power and give me a greater spiritual authority and compassion.

By God's grace, I can choose to be faithful right now. I can choose to love like I have not been hurt. I can choose to trust God. I can yield to His will. I believe Him for my future. I set my hope on eternal things. I am a new creation.

1. List a few things you regret in your past. Then, thank God for them.
2. Look for the memories that sting and hurt. Give those to God.
3. God experiences regret (Exodus 32:11, 1 Samuel 15:11). To REMEMBER! is the anecdote for regret; recall God's personal promises, provision, and your times in God's presence. God will never forget Israel. He will never forget you. List your life scriptures. A garment of praise is the anecdote for a spirit of heaviness.
4. How can you make praise a part of your daily discipline of walking with God?



It is good
for me that
I have
been
afflicted
that I
might
learn His
statutes.

Psalms
119:71



Detox

Resentment

To love deeply is to risk being deeply hurt. As a result, those who we truly cherish can cause us excruciating emotional pain, anguish, grief, tears, and hurt.

Still, without the betrayal and loneliness, I would never be this close to God. A deep sense of thankfulness fills me because I know my soul is better for the suffering. My character and compassion is changed forever.

Many believers harbor resentment, especially against Israel because she is the “apple of God’s eye” — the favored one. But Romans 11 states that the stumbling and trespasses of Israel brought salvation to the Gentiles. Their fullness brings more riches.

Father, we pray that you will reveal any and all resentments that we may harbor. We pray you will enlighten those who resent the Jewish people. Cleanse us. Make us grateful and thankful as you work it all for good.

1. Look for signs of resentment in yourself. These include the need to be right, retaliation, or repeatedly dwelling on hurts. What are other signals you experience?

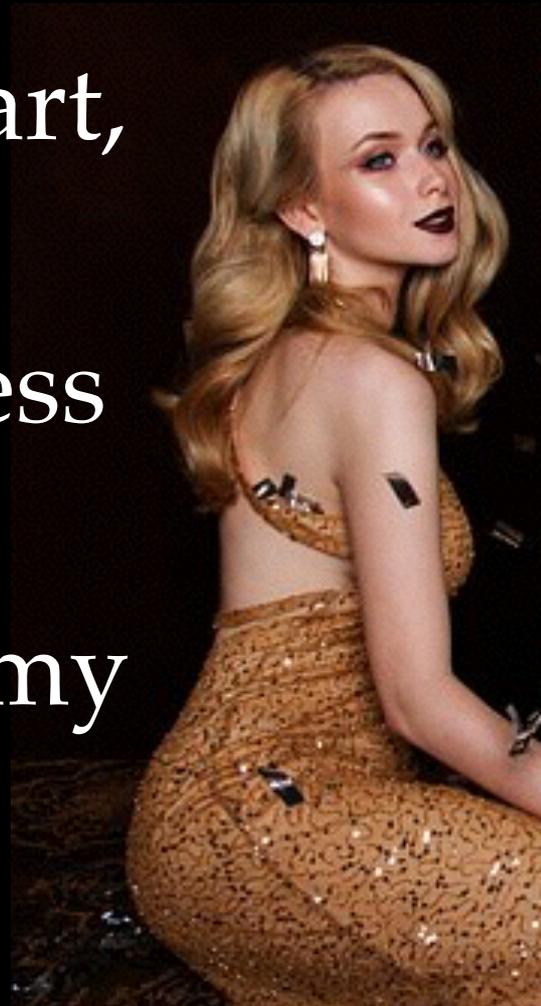
2. Make a list of people and circumstance you resent. Then, apply Romans 8:28 and consider all the ways God is working those situations for your good. Thank Him.

3. Why do you think some Christians resent Israel and the Jewish people or even think that God is done with “the apple of His eye”. Then, read Romans 11.

4. Ask God to bless every person you resent.

And it come to pass,
when he hears the
words of this curse
that he bless himself
in his heart, saying,
I shall have peace,
though I walk
in the imagination
of mine heart,
to add
drunkenness
to thirst.

Deuteronomy
29:19



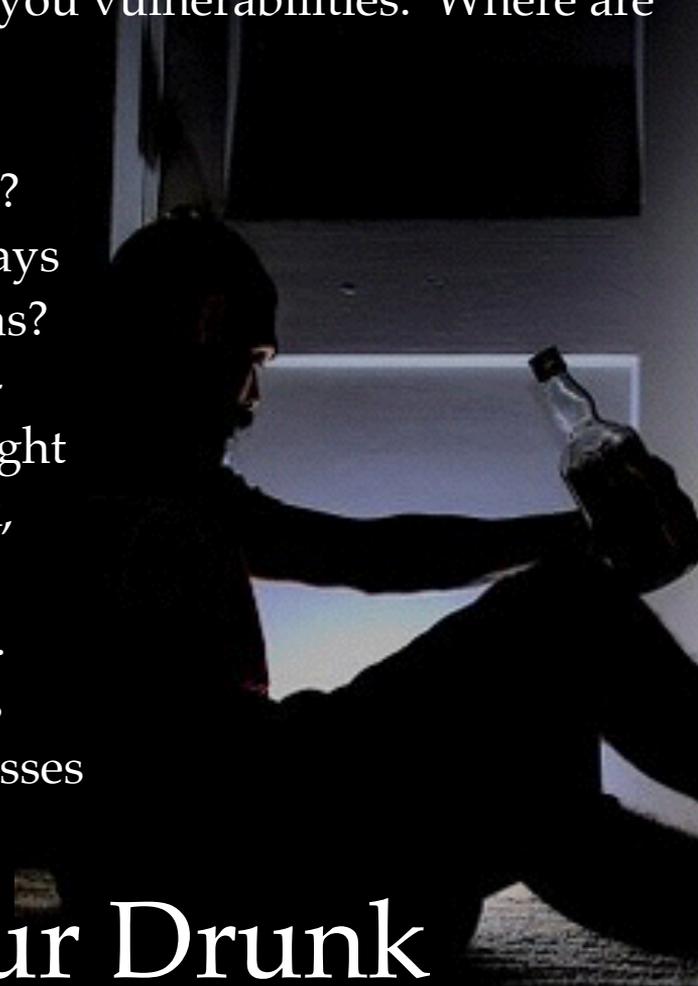
Divorce can drive a person to drink. The thirst for love and connection and meaning and purpose created in the void of divorce can break a person and make them seek dangerous medications for pain.

Personally, I am vulnerable to food, alcohol, being a workaholic, shopping, traveling, and the opposite sex. To mitigate these weaknesses, I cut my hair and determined not to be alluring during this vulnerable time. I allowed myself to eat when in pain, but now, I am moving toward higher quality nutrition with reduced caloric intake. I had to ban alcohol and remember to be content with such things as I have.

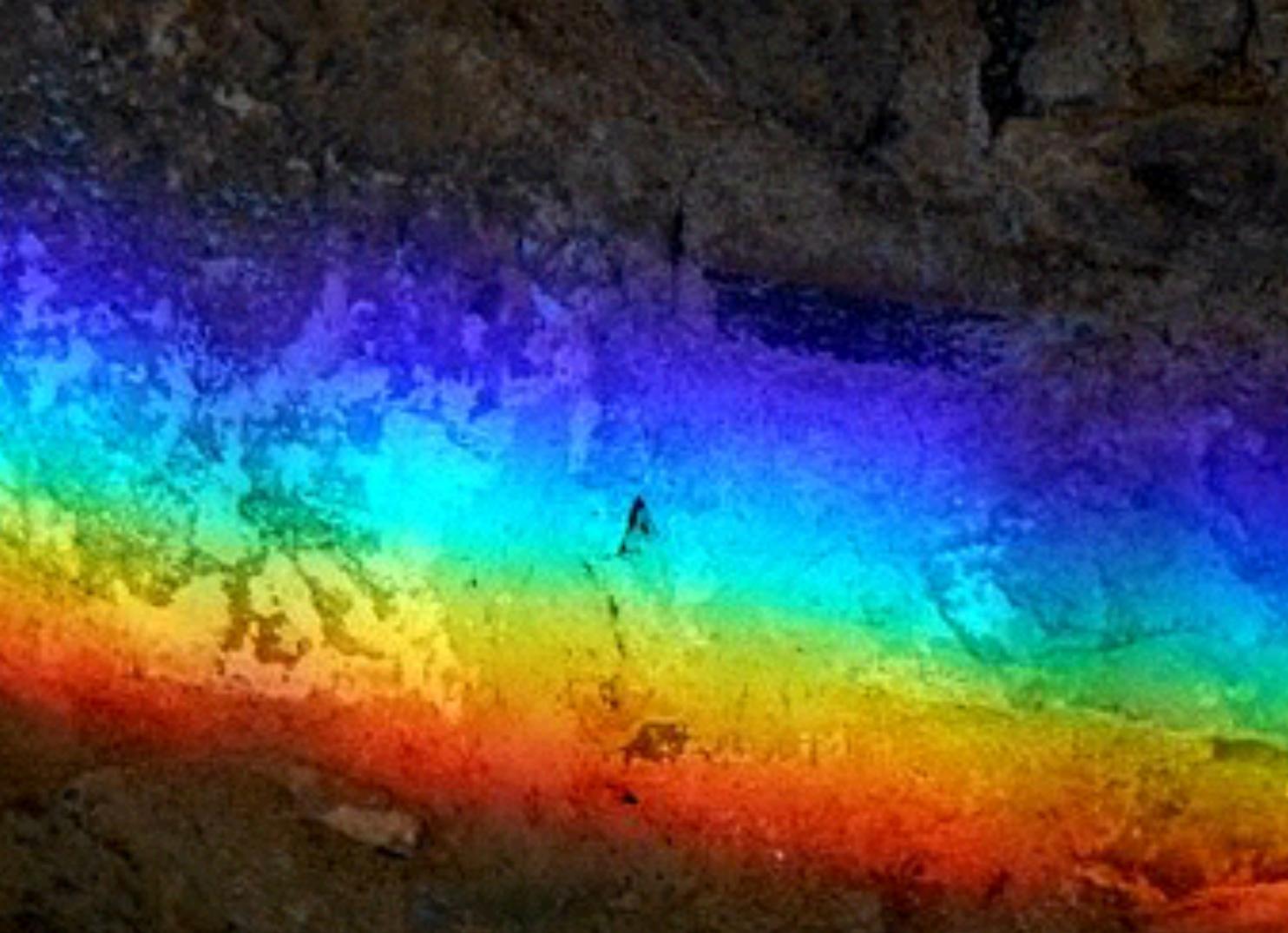
My weaknesses are not unique. Ezekiel 23 tell us that Israel enjoyed a particular lust for other nations who could protect her. She liked warriors. She wanted wealth.

Father, let us only turn to you for protection and fulfillment. May you be our purpose and our place of refuge. Reveal our weaknesses. Shore up our vulnerabilities. Help us to set our faces like a flint, be like Daniel, determined not to be defiled.

1. Pray and ask God to show you vulnerabilities. Where are you weak and stumble?
2. Read Ezekiel 23. Can you relate to any of Israel's sins?
3. What are some practical ways you can mitigate weak areas?
4. Have you experienced self-deception, where you thought you were on the right track, but going terribly wrong?
Go to a friend for feedback.
5. Why do you think God lets us make choices in weaknesses or in His strength?



Detox Your Drunk

A vibrant rainbow arches across a dark, textured background. The colors transition from red at the bottom to purple at the top, with yellow, green, and blue in between. The background has a rough, stone-like appearance with some cracks and shadows.

And I will remember my
covenant, which is between
me and you and every living
creature of all flesh;
and the waters shall no more
become a flood
to destroy all flesh.

Genesis 9:15

Detox the Past

I wonder if Mrs. Noah missed her friends, her family members, her house, and her way of life before the flood. I am guessing she felt grateful to be alive, but, maybe, she longed for the way things used to be, or even the way she thought life should be.

I wonder how God remembers the people who refused to come into the ark. I imagine He wishes they turned from their hideous sins to choose Him instead. They did not. Yet, He promised to never again send a global flood — a relief for Mrs. Noah.

I am grateful that my God keeps His covenants. Still, I wrestle with other who will not, and that feels like a flood, sweeping over my life and destroying my past. I cling to the covenants of God as anchors in this storm. I need something that holds.

Father, thank you for washing my past in your promises. Thank you that I can choose to see devastation as a fresh new beginning. Thank you that you see my future and eternity, and only you know the growth that will come from my flood. By faith, I believe my children join me in the ark of your love. Please make the waters recede. Send your dove of peace. Illuminate the rainbow of your covenants with me.

1. What dreams got destroyed in the flood of your divorce?
2. Even if you are stuck in your circumstances and your situation is intractable, what are a few things you could do today to make a “fresh start”?
3. How does God’s covenant with Noah relate to His promises to Israel and to you?
4. Have you heard any specific promises or words of encouragement from God while riding out this flood? If so, write them down. If not, ask Him to speak to you.
5. Use your imagination. Pretend you are on Noah’s ark. Light, dark, cold, rolling, stinky, scary, waiting, wondering — use words to describe your experience there. Then, relate those words to how you feel about your divorce and your relationship with God in this storm.

...And with all unrighteous
deception
among those who perish,
because they did not receive
the love of the truth,
that they might be saved.
And for this reason God will
send them strong delusion,
that they should
believe the lie.

2 Thessalonians 2:11



The Hebrew word for delusion is the same as wantonness, vexation, and a baby, or more precisely, a tyrant. In the Greek, delusion means wandering or fraud; it is the same word used for deception or error.

Some of the biggest lies of all time concern Israel and the Jewish people. Delusion One: the Jews killed Jesus, The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus but they had no authority to kill anyone. The Romans crucified Jesus. My sin killed Jesus.

Delusion Two: The Jews rejected Jesus. The disciples were all Jews. So were the 120 in the upper room. Jews wrote most of the New Testament and it is based in the Torah. The references are countless.

Delusion Three: Jesus started a new religion called Christianity. In His own words, Jesus said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Further, "I did not come to do away with the law, but to fulfill it."

I have been self-deceived. I have been deluded.

Father, we lift up to you the truth of our past, present, and future. Our reality is skewed by years of delusion. Open our eyes to what you see and know is truth. Illuminate the lies so we can grasp the situation from your perspective. We ask for this, not as an excuse to break faith, but in deep desire to agree with you and act in your will.

1. What are some lies that you chose to believe in your marriage?
2. What lies are you still embracing as you detox from divorce?
3. Why do you think people want to believe the many lies about Israel and the Jewish people?
4. Why did you choose to agree with the deception?
5. What practical steps can you take to stand in truth with grace for yourself and others?

Detox Delusion



He that loves pleasure shall
be a poor man: he that loves
wine and oil shall
not be rich.

Proverbs 21:17

And I heard a voice from
among the four living
beings say, "A loaf of wheat
bread or three loaves of
barley will cost a
day's pay.

And don't hurt
the oil and wine."

Revelation 6:6



In ancient Israel, most storehouses contained wheat, oil, wine, and salt. For me, wheat symbolizes the word of God. Oil symbolizes healing. Wine represents cheerfulness, and salt is the preservative and correction we all need.

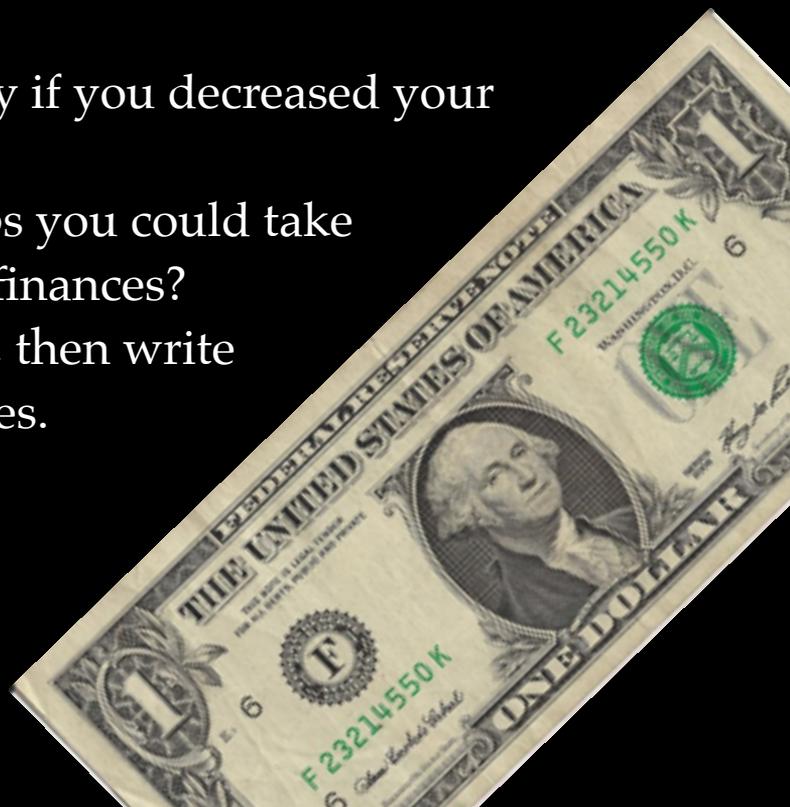
I thought I had a pretty good balance with the desire to guard against wine and a tendency to be a bit salty. I never realized I have a problem with oil.

During my divorce, money is disastrous. Part of Israel's unfaithfulness, as outlined in Malachi 3, is neglect of the tithe. But throughout my divorce, I continue to tithe the first, second, and third tithes of Deuteronomy 12 and 14. I do regular accounting. It still seems like all I do is pay lawyers and buy food. Money runs through my fingers like water into barren ground.

Father, please help me to stop putting pleasure before your priorities. Please help me to stop rationalizing pleasure as a salve on my pain. God, please put me on a budget so I can use oil to shine the light, instead of perfuming myself. Give me wisdom. Change my beliefs about money and my actions to align with you.

1. What unnecessary pleasures are you paying for? Why?
2. If you are a believer and don't tithe, why not? Trust issues during divorce are understandable and tithing is a great opportunity to rebuild trust and test God in the one way He invites us to do so.
3. How could you invest wisely if you decreased your dependence on oil?
4. What are three practical steps you could take today to get control of your finances?
5. Read the book of Habakkuk, then write a new vision for your finances.

Detox Oil



The Almighty who watches
over
Israel
neither
slumbers
nor sleeps.
Psalm 121:4



Detox the Watch

I am exhausted. I maintained hyper vigilance for longer than I can remember. I watched for danger. I watched for improvement. I watched and waited and watched. I watched the people I love hurt themselves. I watched the unspeakable that hurt me.

I cannot imagine how God can watch all of my sin and the rest of the world's. I don't know how He bears all the suffering. Maybe it has to do with His focus.

The scriptures say "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth seeking to prove Himself strong on behalf of those who love Him." God guards Israel. God will restore Israel. Maybe that is why He can watch and wait for so long.

But, I have reached my limit. I can't watch any longer.

Father, please release me from hyper vigilance and the toll it takes on my mind and soul. Please help me to rest in quiet confidence that your love is deeper and stronger than my own and you will watch over everyone and everything I love. Please help me to stand down and relinquish my watch to you.

1. Ask God to show you where you may be hyper vigilant and bring you into balance?
2. What is the difference between fearful vigilance and quiet confidence in prayer?
3. What principles might illuminate why God watches over Israel, Jerusalem, and the Jewish people so very specifically (Psalm 122:5, Psalm 87:2, Romans 11:26)
4. Are there any practical things you can do today so you don't have to watch people you love engage in self-destruction or the destruction of those you love?
5. The joy of the Lord is your strength.
What is the difference between joy and happiness and how can you infuse joy while watching heart breaking events?





Neither let the son of the stranger, that has joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keeps the sabbath from polluting it, and takes hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, which gathers the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him. Isaiah 56: 3-8



Detox Dishonor

Divorce is inherently dishonoring. It is demeaning. It is dejecting. It is devaluing. Divorce is the dissolution of love, honor, cherish, and forsaking all others.

In my marriage and in my divorce, I experienced profound dishonor. I struggled to even put into words my deep pain and worthlessness. I searched to find value.

So, here it is. If my value no longer comes from a home, or children, or the high regard of a life partner, then my honor must come from God. I must know my worth.

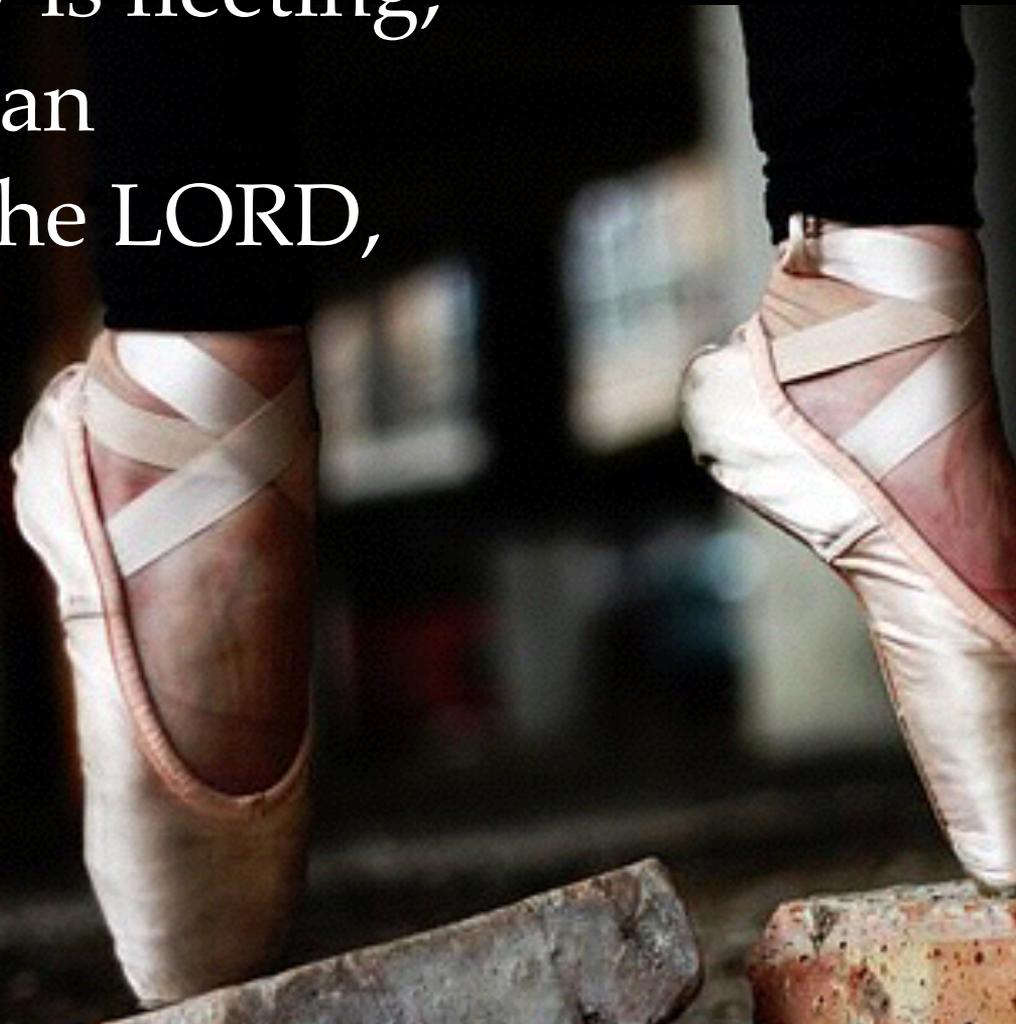
He says, "I am precious in His sight." He says, "I love you so much I would rather die than be without you." He promises me a place and a name. He promises me joy on His Holy mountain. I am honored at the highest level in His most intimate place. I can build my life on these words. I can build hope on His sure promises.

Dear Father, thank you that I have a place with you. I have an everlasting name — a reputation that cannot be lost. I belong to you. You love my soul. You want me.

1. How have you uniquely experienced dishonor in your relationships?
2. How has God filled that place of dishonor with eternal honor that comes from Him?
3. What does Isaiah 56 mean to you?
What is God asking and what is He giving?
4. What can you do to show honor to others?
5. God says, "I will honor those who honor me." How does that promise from God apply to you?

You are altogether beautiful,
my darling;
there is no flaw in you.
Song of Songs 4:7

Favor is deceitful,
and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman
that fears the LORD,
she
shall
be
praised.
Proverbs
31:30



Detox Distortion

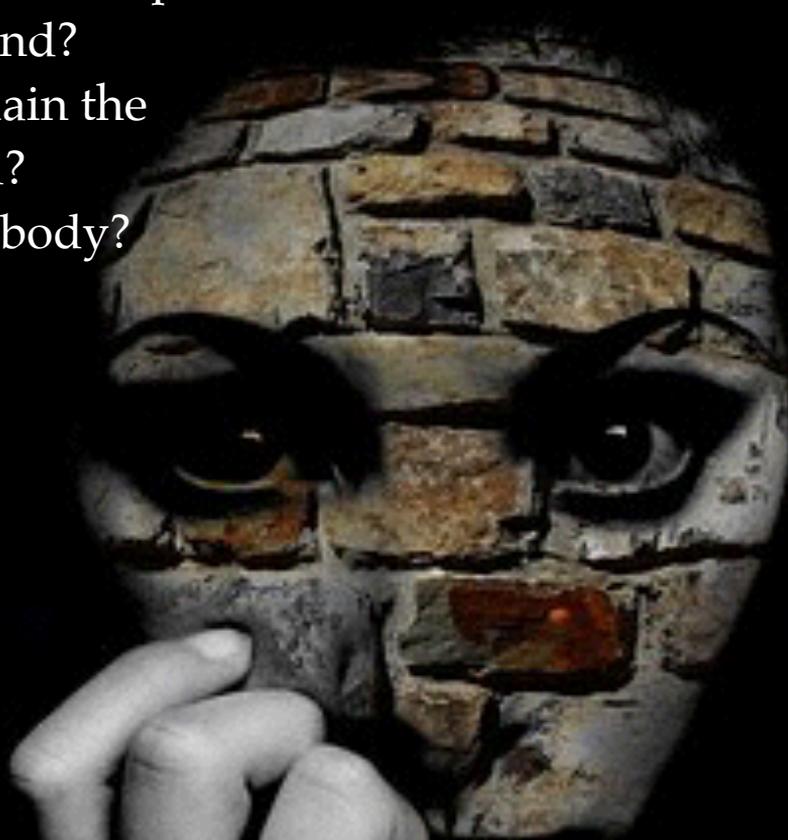
I am older now. I spent my beauty on chores and children. I struggle to reclaim my regal authority. I can be deeply distressed by thinking of my spouse with a younger partner. I cringe. But, like Israel, my story is not over.

When the scriptures describe the actual terrain and land of Israel, God promises a tremendous transformation. The desert will blossom — rocks split and seas shift.

I have a similar future. My body will one day be transformed into marvelous light. My outer man may be perishing, but my inner person grows daily stronger.

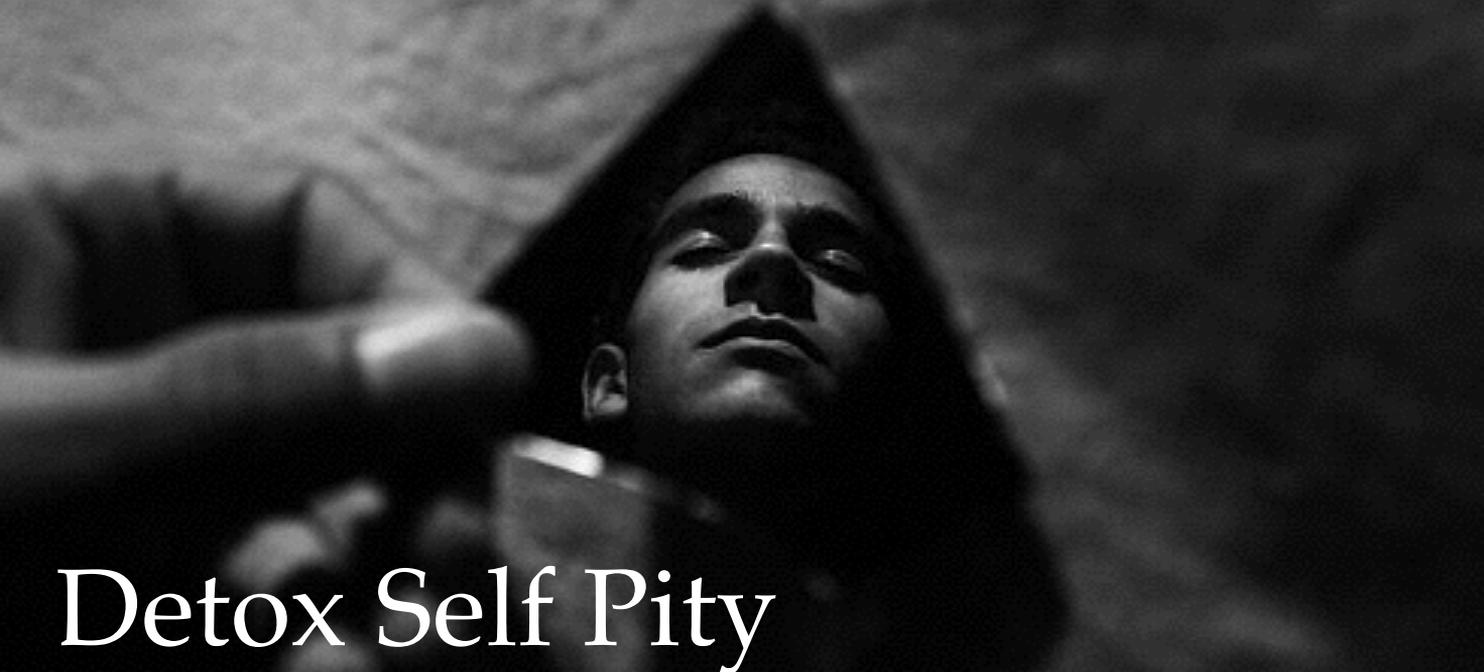
Father, I praise you for my body. You fashioned me in my mother's womb for your perfect purpose. Thank you for my strength and weakness, for my assets and flaws. I am created in your image. Please deliver me from the tyranny of comparison. Let me delight in the form and exquisite function of my earthly body while strengthening my inner person with the quiet beauty that can only come from you.

1. Many people struggle with body image. Describe yours.
2. What thoughts/ideas do you have about your body?
3. If you had a dear friend who compared self to others, how would you advise that friend?
4. What scripture verses explain the value of our bodies to God?
5. How does God view your body?





Come to me, all who labor
and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you,
and learn from me,
for I am gentle and lowly in
heart, and you will find rest
for your souls.
For my yoke is easy,
and my burden is light.
Matthew 11:28-30



Detox Self Pity

In a scene from a movie, the heroine is taking a beating. She's a good guy, chained to a chair, getting creamed by the bad guys. Then, she gets a call from headquarters to report immediately.

She protests, "Not now! I am in the middle of an interrogation. This guy is telling me everything." When her boss insists she come in, she breaks free and beats her captors to a pulp.

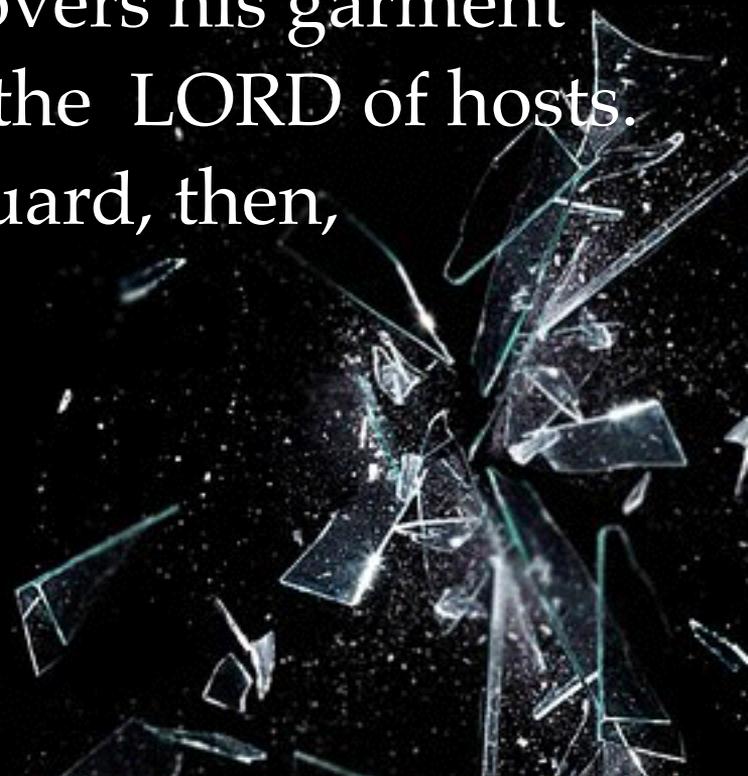
I am coming to realize that my three decades of commitment to God's transformation of my marriage may not have been the point. God used my spouse as an instrument of my growth.

Thank you God for every trial and every resulting transformation that ensued in me. Thank you for my spouse. I am richer in character and compassion. I praise you that the rough rod of my affliction will be the righteous rod of Aaron's anointing. God, please show us how you turn the tables on every injustice and are working all things together for our good.

1. Make a list of the times in your life when you looked defeated but things actually worked in your favor.
2. You may have literally taken a beating in your marriage. If any offenses are still hurting you, list them and ask God to show you His transformation.
3. The Jewish people are the most persecuted on the planet. Yet, God promises them inconceivable honor and glory. Why do you think His kingdom works this way?
4. What is the difference between grief and self pity? Why is self pity destructive?
5. Describe the situations that lead you to self-pity. What is your plan to fight it?

Because the Lord no longer takes note of your offering or accepts it favorably from your hand. And you say, "Why?"— Because the LORD is witness between you and the wife of your youth With whom you have broken faith, though she is your companion, your covenanted wife. Did he not make them one, with flesh and spirit? And what does the One require? Godly offspring! You should be on guard, then, for your life, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce, says the LORD, the God of Israel, And the one who covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. You should be on guard, then, for your life, and you must not break faith.

Malachi 2:11-16



Detox Love

Be on guard for your life. Sappy, sentimental semblances of love stink. Gooshy romantic notions or lustful feelings are not self-sacrifice, long suffering, patient, or even kind.

That's why people can say crazy things like, "I love you, but I am not in love with you." Or, "I love you. I just don't like you. I love you, but I want my cake and eat it too."

The Messiah commands a higher standard. He says, "Love them as I have loved you."

God loves Israel. He loves Judah. He disciplined and afflicted them for their betrayal. He did this to win them back and draw them to Him in purity.

So, don't tell me you love me. Act like it. Stow your ego. Don't whisper sweet nothings until you show me that I am worth some suffering. Lay down your life a little.

Father, I again thank you that would rather die than be without me. Help me to practice self-sacrificial love. Help me to endure as you did. Help me to hold the line while I hold the hand; that always looks like an execution stake — the cross.

1. How do the scriptures define love? How do you exemplify that definition?
2. How can you practice self-sacrificial love today?
3. What do you pray for your mate?
4. How can you love like you haven't been hurt?
5. If you are lonely, pray for God to show you new outlets for your love.





Lord, my heart is not haughty,
Nor my eyes lofty.

Neither do I concern myself
with great matters,

Nor with things
too profound for me.

Surely I have calmed and
quieted my soul,

Like a weaned child
with his mother;

Like a weaned child
is my soul within me.

O Israel, hope in the Lord
From this time forth and forever.

Psalm 131

Detox Concern

Grief can consume you. The torment of your beloved embraced by another or the burning shame of rejection is simply too much for a soul to bear. (The Father must feel that every day.)

I now realize that the choices of my spouse do not reflect on me. In short, they are no longer my concern.

I can pray for God to “set the captives free”, but I do not need to ruminate. I am not responsible for their soul. Some will say this attitude is simply giving up on a person.

They claim you should never do that.

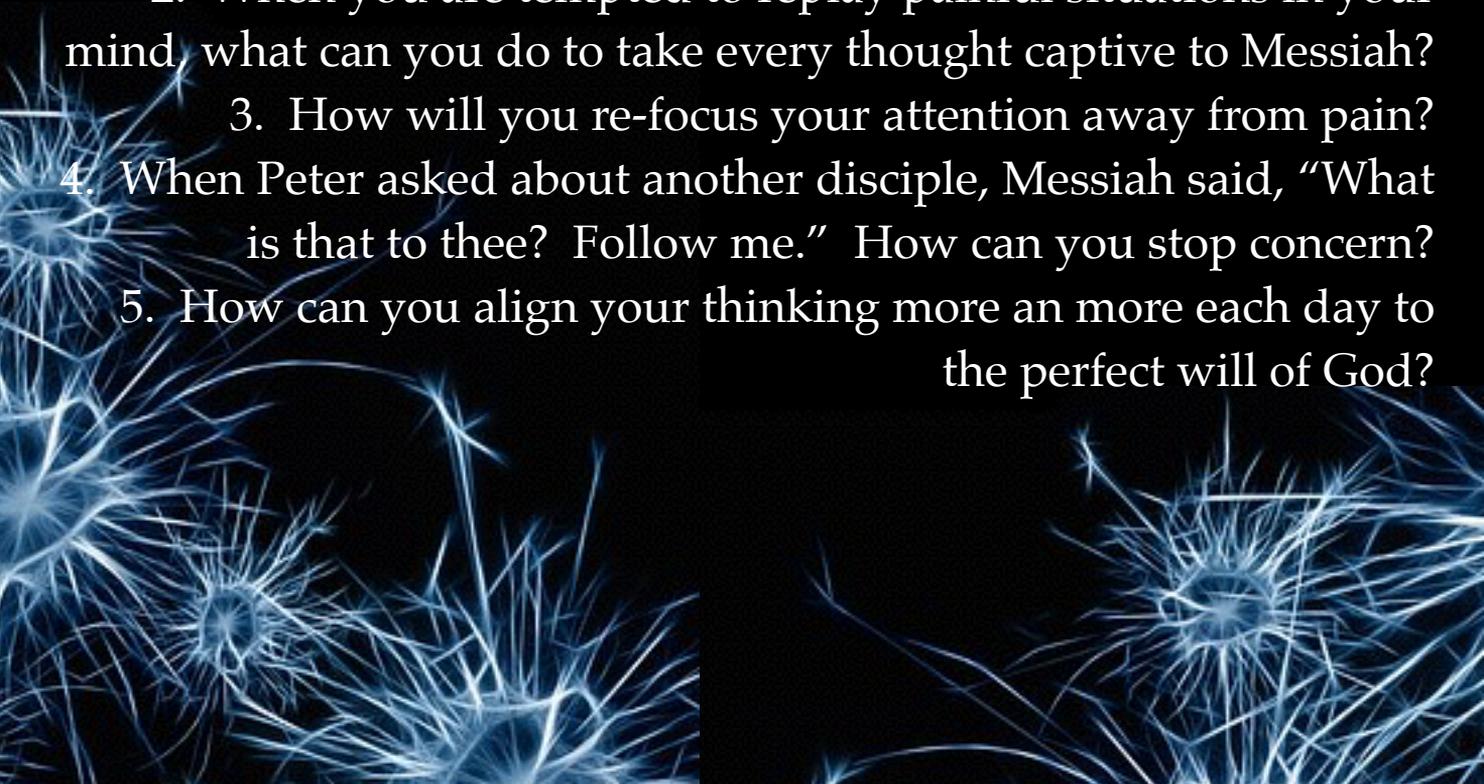
On the contrary, I become one with God as I respect the sovereignty of individual free will. God will not force anyone to love Him. Nor will I try, even in my prayers.

Now, I surrender to God’s will. I say the Lord’s will be done and His kingdom come, even if that prayer coincides with the destruction of my marriage.

Father, give us Biblical strategies to guard our hearts and minds. Lover of our souls, we lift up our inner person to you.

May we find deep peace and restoration.

1. Rumination involves exhausting mental attention to painful and hurtful events. How can you halt mental anguish?
2. When you are tempted to replay painful situations in your mind, what can you do to take every thought captive to Messiah?
3. How will you re-focus your attention away from pain?
4. When Peter asked about another disciple, Messiah said, “What is that to thee? Follow me.” How can you stop concern?
5. How can you align your thinking more and more each day to the perfect will of God?





No one can ever redeem
his brother or give God
ransom for him,
because the price for him
is too high
(leave the idea
completely alone!),
to have him live on eternally
and never see the pit.

Psalm 49: 7-9

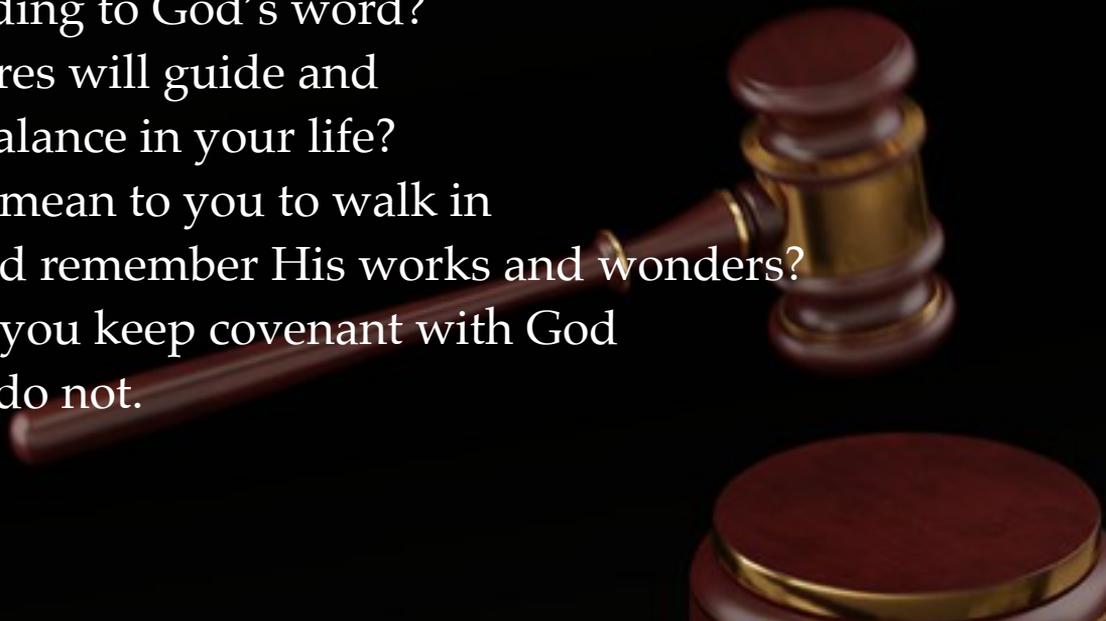
Detox Responsibility

The price of a soul is too high. I cannot pay it. It is not my job to redeem my spouse. It is not even my job to pray and pray and pray that God will redeem them. My job is to love the Lord with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength and love my neighbor as myself. I am not the savior of another man's soul.

While I am released from redemptive responsibility, there is tension. We see in Psalm 78: 10-11, "The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law and forgot his works, and his wonders that he had showed them." Clearly, there is a responsibility to use our training and spiritual weapons in battle for the Kingdom and the hearts and minds of men.

Father, help me to come into right relationship with your will and your word. Help me to surrender all my loved ones to your tender care with a deep and abiding trust that you love them more than I. I cast my cares upon you because you care for me and will work all things together for my good and your glory. I release myself from the responsibility of other people's choices and the responsibility of results while persevering in truth.

1. In life, do you tend to take more responsibility or less? Why?
2. How could you find the perfect balance of responsibility and release according to God's word?
3. What scriptures will guide and inform this balance in your life?
4. What does it mean to you to walk in God's law and remember His works and wonders?
5. Explain how you keep covenant with God when others do not.





I can do all things
through Messiah
who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13

Detox Self Doubt

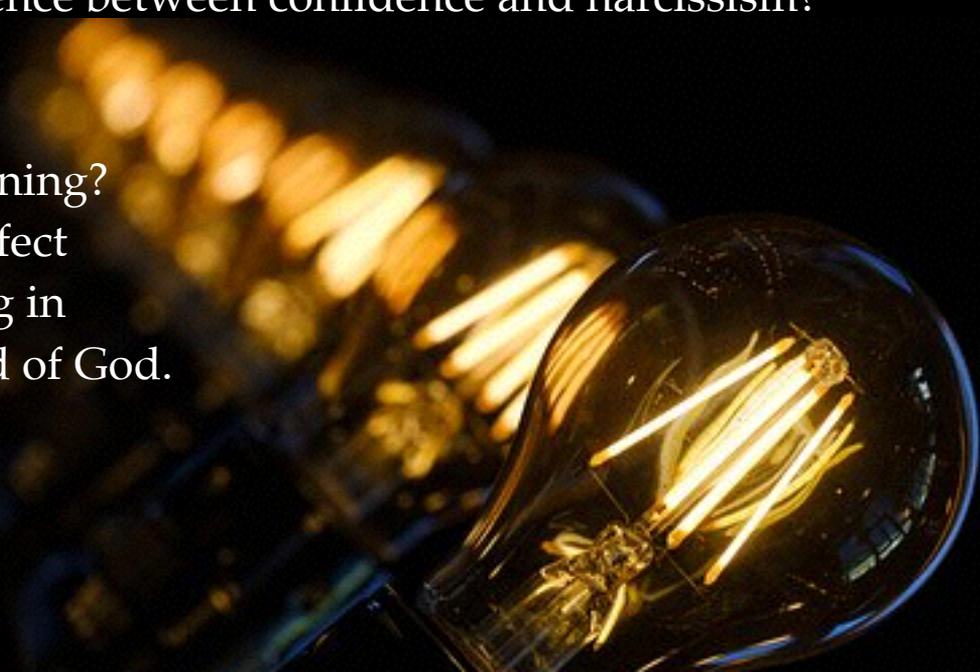
Divorce destroys self-confidence. Rejection wrecks and reduces our worth to rubble. Divorce destructs personality and warps reality. Divorce stinks.

Divorce devises to defeat me. I am a relatively capable and intelligent person reduced to sniveling and groveling in the face of adversarial courts that I can't comprehend and the deep incalculable loss of love with the accompanying shrapnel of collateral damage that colludes to ravage my soul.

No more! God gives me wisdom. The blood of Messiah proclaims my worth. I will stop acting like an un-believer or a make believer and choose to believe that I am the righteousness of God in Messiah.

Father, help me to stop praying for deliverance from pain. Help me to pray for strength and endurance and the ability to grow. Help me to desist from doubting the mighty works you do in and through me. Help me to embrace your destiny for my life. Let me thank you for every trial. My I raise a banner of courage! I am filled with the spirit of the living God.

1. What makes you doubt the wisdom and strength God provides in you?
2. What specific aspects of your personality do you doubt the most? Why?
3. What is the difference between confidence and narcissism?
4. Do you tend to be more prideful or more self-condemning?
5. Describe your perfect balance of walking in the truth as a child of God.





“This is what the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies says:
The traditional fasts and times
of mourning
you have kept in early summer,
midsummer, autumn, and
winter are now ended.
They will become festivals of
joy and celebration
for the people of Judah.
So love truth and peace.
Zechariah 8:19



Detox Gloom and Doom

The Devil's strategies are not new. He has his designs on the Jews. He has his designs on you.

Worldwide, the Jewish people fast on the 17th of Tammuz to mark six historic events: the destruction of the first set of the 10 commandments, the end of temple sacrifices, a Roman burning of Torah scrolls, idols in the temple, and the final destruction of the temple. It is a pattern for what the enemy plots against us all.

The accuser wants us to forget the law, stop praising God, stop reading the word, set up idols in our own hearts so a just and loving God will discipline us. Don't do it.

Divorce is so devastating; we are tempted to blame God, stop praising Him, cast aside his word, and not trust Him with our relationships. Our inner man, the temple where God abides, can be ravaged and burnt as we cling to our own will.

Merciful and gracious God, please give us your view of our losses. Give us the strength to trust you and abide in your word no matter how much pain we endure. Comfort us with the truth that all we mourn will be turned for joy and gladness.

1. Describe what law and grace look like in your life.
2. How can you use praise as a weapon of spiritual warfare?
3. Messiah said, "Could you not watch and pray with me for one hour?" What are your disciplines to abide in God's word?
4. How can you protect your inner man from fear ?
5. How do you overcome bleak circumstances?

Cry out and shout, thou
inhabitant of Zion:
for great is the
Holy One of Israel
in the midst of you.
Isaiah 12:6





Detox Drudgery

Divorce is depressing. It is easy to get down, dejected, and in the dumps.

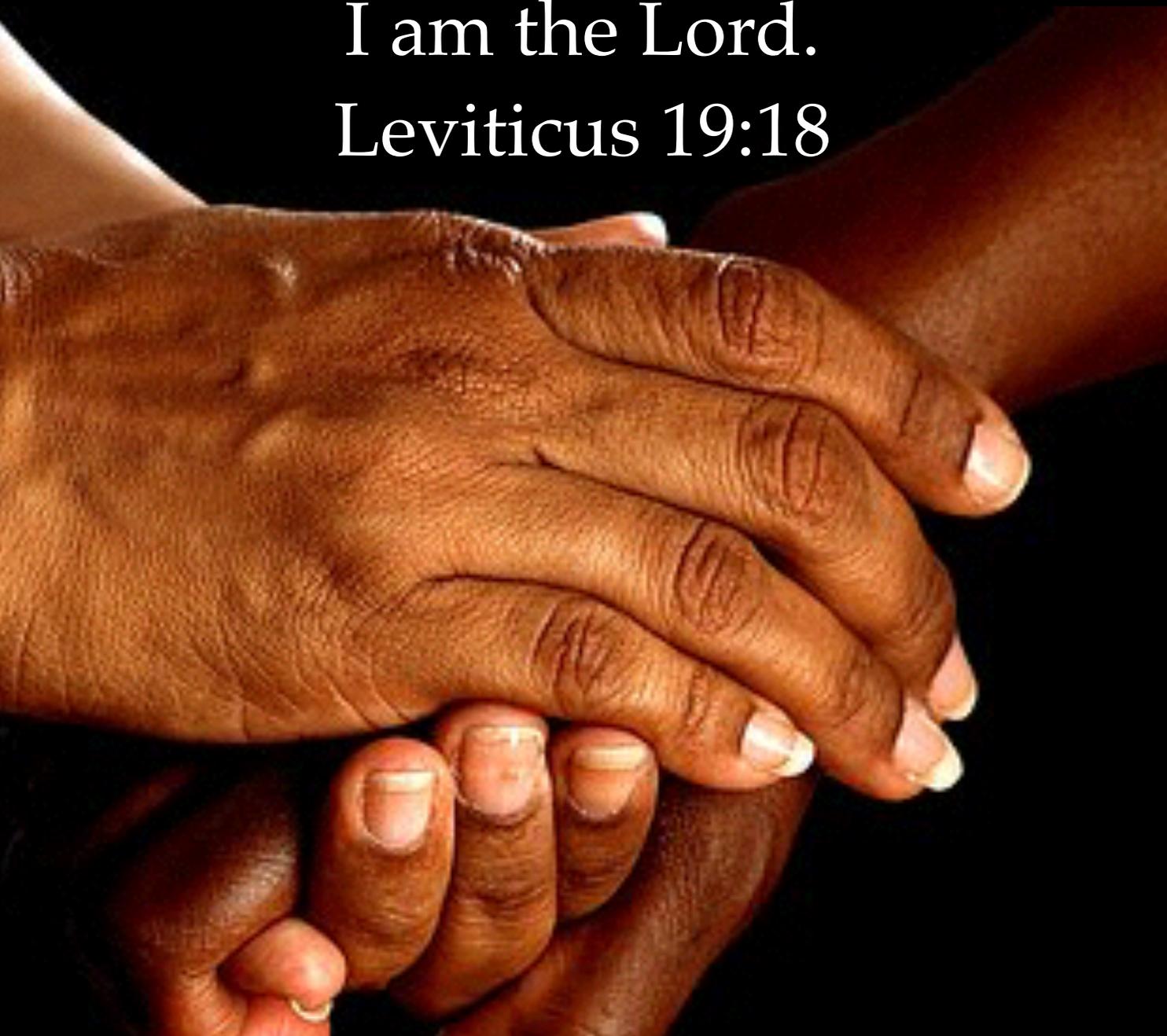
If you have visited Israel, you will realize these people celebrate everything. Even though they live under constant threat of extinction, they pursue joy and delight and life.

I am committed to celebrating every stage of God's unique redemptive work in me. Celebration brings strength and endurance. It is actually one of God's tools to recharge and enlighten our eyes so we can persevere under pressure. The Sabbath honors God and re-charges us. Celebration is fun.

Oh, Heavenly Father, will you please give us just the right balance of celebration in our lives accompanied by grateful and thankful hearts for your rich blessings even in the midst of our deepest pain. Help us to relish that you are preparing us for greater things and to be creative in how we celebrate you, life, and those we love.

1. We serve a deity who builds mansions and plans banquets. If He celebrates, what keeps you from celebrating in general?
2. Where do you find yourself in the stages of divorce recovery? How can you celebrate in the midst of this stage?
3. Consider your loved ones. How do you imagine they will respond when you celebrate them and their milestones?
4. List some ways people celebrate. Which of those seem to fit your personality?
5. How can you make celebration an intentional part of your life for good?

You shall not avenge,
nor bear any grudge
against the children
of your people,
but you shall love
your neighbor
as your self:
I am the Lord.
Leviticus 19:18





Detox Imbalance

Divorce deals harsh blows to balance. Like any crisis, it reveals critical weaknesses, cracks in our theology, crevices in our life practices. Hard times have a way of revealing hidden half-truths and sideways self sentiments that need correction.

Some people sway toward grace and away from truth. Other believers love the New Testament and neglect the first half of the redemptive story. For me, I subordinated self to the needs of others. I thought that I practiced Biblical love and laid down my self for the other. But this is not truth.

In Mark 12:30-31, the Lord calls us to love Him with our whole being. Then, He says, "Love your neighbor as your self." The word "as" in the Greek means according, similarly, equally, in the same manner, exactly like. This is identical to the Hebrew in the book of Leviticus. God did not say love others more than self. He commands every person to look out for others "also".

I thought love meant give and give and give unconditionally, I had no boundaries. But, I also had solid truth without the grace to go with it.

Father, forgive me for giving away anything that belongs to you. Bring me into a beautiful balance so that I can rightly divide your word of truth. Help me to value what you value in a way that honors you and brings you glory. Help me to give when you want me to give and be still otherwise.

1. What theological leanings and imbalances are being revealed by your divorce?
2. How might these imbalances hinder your effectiveness for the Kingdom?
3. What steps can you take to know God's balance and come into it for yourself?
4. How do you define Biblical love?
5. Are you more of a giver or a taker? Why?



There is therefore now
no condemnation
to those who are in Messiah,
who do not walk
according to the flesh,
but according to the Spirit.
Romans 8:1

Detox Shame

In the Hebrew, the word for shame is “boosh”. It means to pale, to fail in hope and expectation, to delay and frustrate your endeavors, and disgrace. In the Greek it is “entrepo” which simply means profound disrespect and dishonor. For researchers, who say “the less you talk about it, the more you got it”, shame is the intense feeling you are unworthy and unloveable. It is not that you have done wrong; you are wrong.

Guilt is productive. Guilt says “wake up.” You hurt someone. Turn around. Shame is debilitating. Shame wants you self-absorbed, isolated, and silent, so your damaged self stifles concern or care for anyone else. Shame smothers empathy.

In Isaiah 61, Messiah promises a double blessing as the anecdote for shame. We receive double compensation for the confounding, disgrace, delays, and dishonor we receive for His sake. And, Isaiah 54 is especially comforting after a divorce. “Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.” (Isaiah 54:4) Even Messiah despised the shame of the cross, but he endured it for future joy.

Almighty Father, we despise the shame that comes from broken relationships. We loathe our failures. We detest the fact that our best efforts brought us here. Please lift our heads and break off dishonor and shame from our souls.

1. Do you ever feel ashamed of yourself? When and why?
2. Do you ever feel guilty? Why?
3. How do guilt and shame differ?
4. Shame is selfishness, self-absorbed, how does that work in your life?
5. What specific steps can you take to detox your soul from shame?

I say then, has Adonai cast away
His people?

Certainly not!

For I also am an Israelite,
of the seed of Abraham,
of the tribe of Benjamin.

God has not cast away
His people Israel
whom He foreknew.

Romans 11:1-2



Detox Time

My memories are too painful. My present is excruciating. The future I hoped for disintegrated. My horizon is unknown. There is no space in my brain for the pain. So, I commune with the one who will never cast me off — the one who keeps covenant.

With Him, I envision all my past heaved into the sea and sinking to the ocean floor. If there is beauty back there, it will wash up on gentle beaches where I can gather and keep pleasant mementos, like sea shells. Until then, my past is flooded.

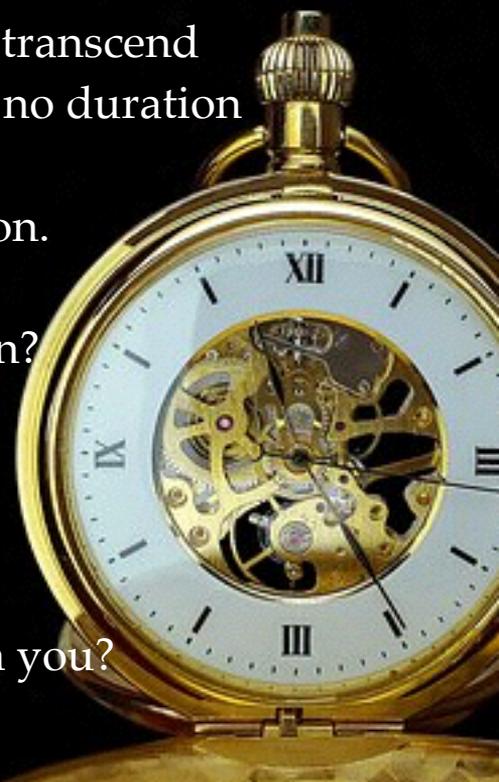
I am at a loss of what to do about my future — what I hoped for never was. My dreams were as real to me as children. It breaks my heart to part with those hopes. So, I place them behind a heavy beautifully ornate metal turquoise door. I imagine it is an entry into a secret garden where my unborn ideals run and play. I cannot reach them. They will not come to me, but they are happy and safe.

My future is unknown to me, but God knows what will and always has been ordained to be. I use my free will to gently place my future in His cupped hands.

My present hurts. I have been in pain so long that I pretend that this is my first day in jail. Next, I imagine every injury coming through a hole in His nail scarred hand. I know nothing meets my world without first passing through His.

Father, we ask you for this, the ability to transcend time. To walk with you in freedom that knows no duration or uncertainty. Bless us with peace of mind.

1. Israel waits thousands of years for redemption.
How long have you been suffering?
2. What aspect of time causes you the most pain?
3. How can God bring deep peace and shalom while you endure?
4. What mental models or ways of looking at your divorce bring you peace?
5. What does it mean that God is not done with you?



The Prophecy of Simeon

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign King, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal Adonai to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from Adonai, but many will oppose him. And a sword will pierce your very soul that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Luke 2: 25-35



Detox Soul Swords

Divorce annihilates the soul. It covers us in violence. It is a peculiar wrenching of the inner person filled with anguish and desolation. It is indescribably painful.

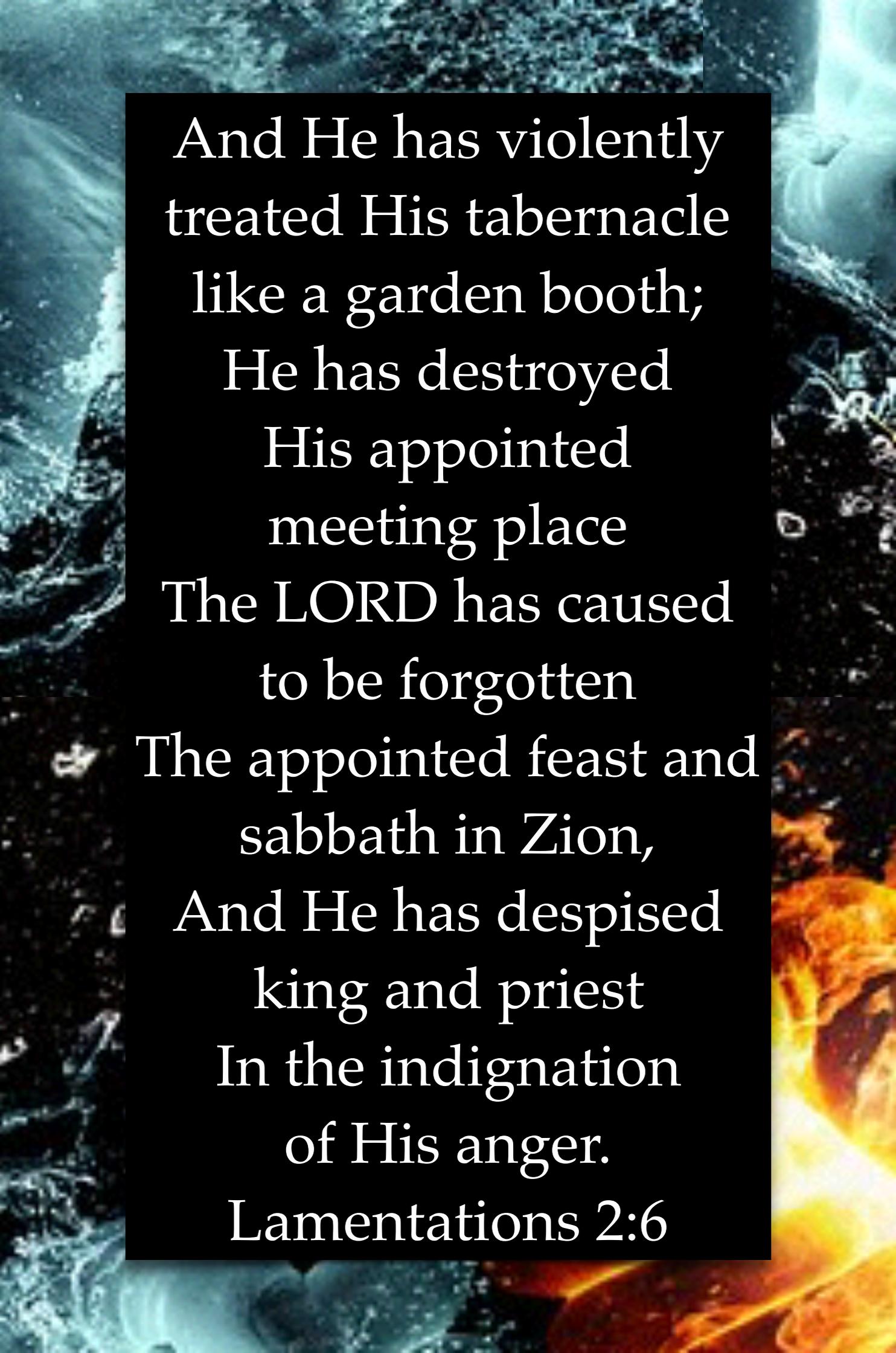
Yet, it is possible that a sword piercing your very soul may be redemptive work. In fact, the sword that pierces Mary's soul is clearly promised to bring forth revelation.

Further, the peculiar anguish of divorce and its assault on the soul may bring us into deeper fellowship, awareness, identification, and companionship with our King. Personally, I have never felt such deep comfort as I have while offering up my soul wounds to my compassionate savior who suffers with me even as He uses my pain to break forth treasures of darkness that could not manifest in my soul any other way.

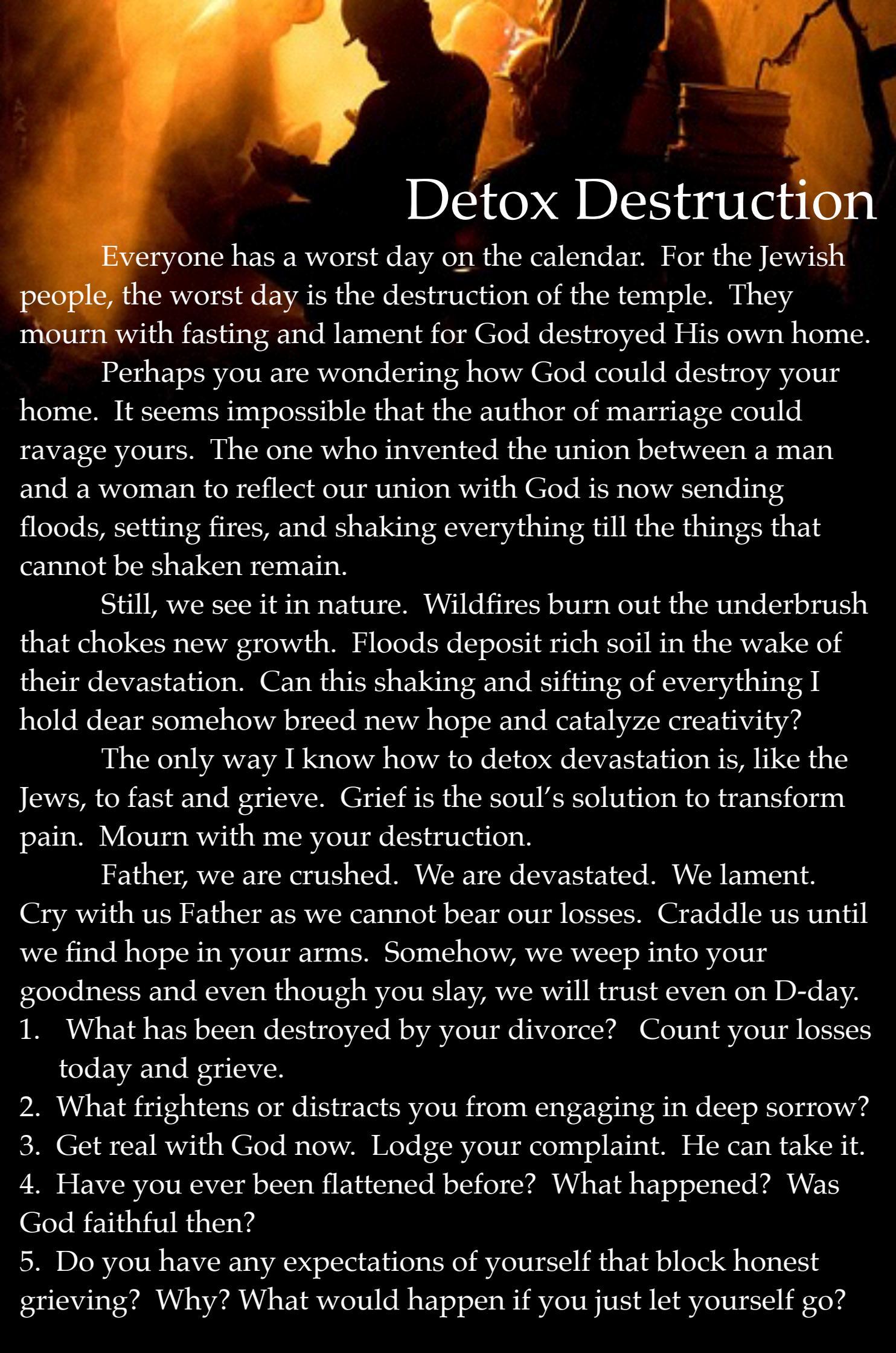
Father, thank you that my pain has a purpose. I give you free reign to perfect and mold my soul. Thank you that you can use soul trauma to bring forth revelation and touch many hearts. Thank you for customized comfort for my anguish. Thank you that nothing is wasted with you.

1. How would you describe the current condition of your soul?
2. What falsehoods and facades might your soul cast off during this chaos?
3. Alexander Solzhenitsyn said the meaning of life is the development of the soul. What does your soul need to learn that can only be acquired through divorce?
4. Amy Carmichael claimed there are some trials so valuable that if we missed them, our soul would be impoverished. How could divorce possibly enrich your soul?
5. Is it possible to heal after divorce? If so, how will you identify a healed soul?





And He has violently
treated His tabernacle
like a garden booth;
He has destroyed
His appointed
meeting place
The LORD has caused
to be forgotten
The appointed feast and
sabbath in Zion,
And He has despised
king and priest
In the indignation
of His anger.
Lamentations 2:6



Detox Destruction

Everyone has a worst day on the calendar. For the Jewish people, the worst day is the destruction of the temple. They mourn with fasting and lament for God destroyed His own home.

Perhaps you are wondering how God could destroy your home. It seems impossible that the author of marriage could ravage yours. The one who invented the union between a man and a woman to reflect our union with God is now sending floods, setting fires, and shaking everything till the things that cannot be shaken remain.

Still, we see it in nature. Wildfires burn out the underbrush that chokes new growth. Floods deposit rich soil in the wake of their devastation. Can this shaking and sifting of everything I hold dear somehow breed new hope and catalyze creativity?

The only way I know how to detox devastation is, like the Jews, to fast and grieve. Grief is the soul's solution to transform pain. Mourn with me your destruction.

Father, we are crushed. We are devastated. We lament. Cry with us Father as we cannot bear our losses. Cradle us until we find hope in your arms. Somehow, we weep into your goodness and even though you slay, we will trust even on D-day.

1. What has been destroyed by your divorce? Count your losses today and grieve.
2. What frightens or distracts you from engaging in deep sorrow?
3. Get real with God now. Lodge your complaint. He can take it.
4. Have you ever been flattened before? What happened? Was God faithful then?
5. Do you have any expectations of yourself that block honest grieving? Why? What would happen if you just let yourself go?



And Moses took the book
of the covenant,
and read in the audience
of the people;
and they said,
All that the Almighty
has said,
we will do
and be obedient
Exodus 24:7

Detox Broken Promises

People break contracts all the time. At the same time, I am acutely aware that I made a promise before God to forsake all others until death. I feel tremendous responsibility not to break faith.

Frankly, I am unsure how to detox destruction of our covenant. I entered into the contract of marriage with the reasonable expectation that the other party desired to be in union, both willing and able to fulfill their portion of the agreement, with binding vows. I am at a loss how to respond.

Scripture tells us to reject the rebellious after the second and third admonition. After due process, if covenant breakers refuse to listen, then treat them like an outsider (Matthew 18:15-17). Scripture tells us to shake the dust off our feet and move on.

But, my heart cries for this person I love. I really don't want to let go. I long to give grace. Grace without truth is a sham.

My solution is the frightening admonition of Joshua 23:13. If I cling and associate with sinful ways, they will become a snare, a trap, a scourge, and thorns in my eyes.

Dear Father, please detox me from broken vows. Please help me to surrender. Help me to let go according to sound Biblical wisdom. Release me from the prison of my own desires. Replace those desires with yours. Amen

1. What do you do when someone carelessly breaks a contract ?
2. Why do we tend to cling to life branches the Lord is pruning?
3. Have you ever asked the Lord to change your heart or change His?
4. What new desires does the Father long to place in your heart?
5. How can you continue to trust God and connect with others despite your divorce?

Behold, the days are coming,
declares the Almighty,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant I made
with their fathers when I took them
by the hand to lead them out of Egypt
— a covenant they broke,
though I was a husband to them,”
declares the LORD. “

But this is the covenant I will make with
the house of Israel
after those days,
declares the Almighty.
I will put My law in their minds
and inscribe it on their hearts.

And I will be their King,
and they will be
My people.

Jeremiah 31: 31-33





Detox Loss

Pop the pill and presto! All pain, all suffering, all losses vaporize into thin air. Sadly, life doesn't work that way. This war demanded heavy losses. Rubble remains.

If I knew what all this pain was buying, I probably wouldn't be crying. If I could glimpse the heavenly perspective, a hint of the eternal, then the glint of faith more precious than gold might catch my eye. I might find contentment. I might sigh. I might be able to make it.

My marriage covenant is shredded. A new covenant is needed. This devastation demands a better covenant, so I can live with the law emblazoned on my mind and love inscribed on my tender heart. I can belong to my Maker. There is something new coming.

Father, show me how to let go. Help me to see this life from your perspective. Give me the strength to trust you. Heal my brokenness. Turn my Valley of Baca (tears) into a place of pools.

1. Do some accounting. Once again, list your losses. Then, forfeit all. Ask God to repay. Then, wait. Expect Him. He's good for it.
2. The ancient writings say those who give to the poor lend to the Lord and He will repay, and those who experience loss for the sake of the gospel are repaid 100 fold. What scripture will you lean on to remind yourself that God keeps His promises?
3. Ask God to show you His accounting columns. Let Him list the wins and losses from His perspective. For me, I see deep compassion born of suffering, greater empathy, less judgement, more resolve not to compromise with injustice, strength to stand in the face of adversity, truth bathed in grace. I am a deeper person now with less shallow and more shalom. Let Him show you what His trial has won. Count the joy.

How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?



How can I set you like Zeboiim?
(Cities destroyed with Sodom)
My heart churns within Me;
My sympathy is stirred.
Hosea 11:8

Detox Desire

Letting go seems impossible. I fought and prayed and worked and never imagined these lousy results or my inability to sustain the single most significant human relationship in my life. I feel like an epic failure and dread the end of love.

However, I have comfort. There are a few small words from my King that transform my outlook; “He withholds no good thing from those who love Him”.

If my marriage is good for me, if it is God’s best for me, it will surely be mine. If, on the other hand, my life will be fraught with frustration, pain, unmet needs, cruel apathy and callous indifference, then I don’t want it. Love me deeply or set me free.

Almighty God, I trust that you know best. You are a good and loving Father who sees farther and knows your children. I pray that you will restore my marriage if it is your very best for me. If it is not your will, then I accept that your ways are higher than mine. Transform my desires to thine.

1. How can you surrender your desires to a deeper purpose?
2. What work must you do to surrender and accept the reality of your divorce?
3. Is it possible to accept the reality of your divorce and still pray for your spouse?
4. What would it look like to be love to your spouse while not being in love?
5. Being benevolent and kind will bring you peace of mind. What kindness can you show to your former spouse despite the death of some of your deepest desires and dreams?





Pilate said, “So you are a king?”

Messiah responded,

“You say I am a king.

Actually, I was born

and came into the world

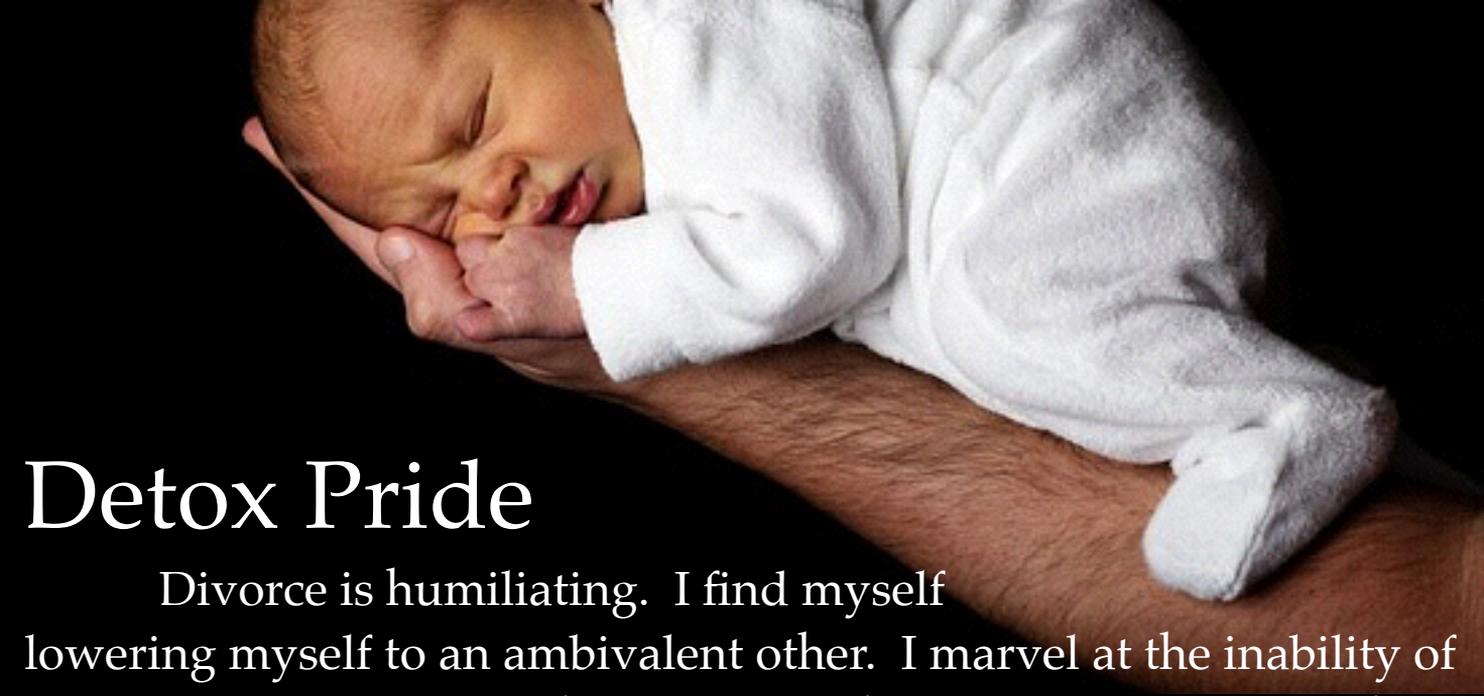
to testify to the truth.

All who love the truth

recognize that what I say

is true.”

John 18:37



Detox Pride

Divorce is humiliating. I find myself lowering myself to an ambivalent other. I marvel at the inability of my life partner to grasp the deep loss, the irreplaceable value, the eternal worth tossed into the trash. I just can't understand how something or someone so precious could be casually put away.

Yet, each time I try to reach out again, each time I pray again, I remember that the one who loves me the most was a King who laid aside His crown, came down, to be born on the ground, and stripped Himself of all dignity to prove His love for me. When I think of that kind of love, I cannot demonstrate enough humility. My anger and indignation and self-righteousness simply cannot withstand the litmus test of the cross. God makes me want to reach out. He stands at the door and knocks. How can I do less.

Gracious and benevolent Father, You resist the proud. You exalt the humble. Help me to not think more highly of myself than I ought. Help me not to think any less of myself, just to think of myself less. Help me to take every step, extend every olive branch that you command. Let grace and truth be in perfect balance as I detest pride and embrace humility.

1. What is the root of your pride? How could you root out pride in your life?
2. What part did pride play in your divorce?
3. If you could lay down your pride, what steps would you take today?
4. Describe the role of humility in your detox and recovery?
5. How is humility different than co-dependence?



They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

Jeremiah 11:10

Detox

Co-Dependency

God is not co-dependent.

He is not devastated by those who disregard Him. He is not destroyed by anger, apathy, ambivalence, or lukewarm love. Cherry-picking and twisting of scripture to fit convenience doesn't change Him. His magnificence is not diminished by those who live like Hell and claim His mercy as a license to sin.

He wants us. He died for us. But, He is not desperately whining for us. He is intelligent, rational, and romantic. He meets us at every opportunity to winsomely win us to Himself without compromising one inch of His essence.

The Gospels tell the story of a rich young ruler. Jesus gave this young person clear direction for growth and relationship. The young man went away sad, but chose not to act. Jesus didn't chase after him, crying and clinging, imploring him not to make the biggest mistake of his life. Jesus simply presented the truth and let him choose.

Choices are powerful because God's promises are not unconditional. The word "if" occurs 1,595 in the Bible. Even the famous John 3:16 treatise of eternal life comes with a condition — believe.

I have no clue how to love like this — healthy, clear choice, with freedom.. I desperately need to grow in grace and the knowledge of God. Almighty God, only you can show me what real love looks like in action. I cannot stand my own sick, self-serving semblance of sacrifice that masquerades as unfailing love. Give me strength.

1. One scholar defines co-dependence as making God small and people BIG. That's idolatry. What is your definition of co-dependence? Why does it matter?
2. If you have been co-dependent in your marital relationship, how so and why?
3. What can you do to change your patterns and detox co-dependency?
4. Read the story of David and his son Absalom. Analyze David's attitudes and behaviors. Do you like what you see?
5. The definition of Biblical love is patient, kind, hopes all things, endures all things, seeks not its own, keeps no records of wrong, and never fails. How can you do real love without co-dependence?





And the Lord
said unto me
The backsliding
Israel
has justified
herself more than
treacherous
Judah.
Jeremiah 3:11

Detox Self-Justification

No one wants to be the bad guy. No one wants to be the home wrecker, the infidel, the castigator, or the shrew. So, we rationalize and justify our evil.

I can rationalize just about anything. I can justify buying an expensive pair of shoe or tires. I can tell myself I am making intelligent decisions when I am driven by my feelings, my emotions, and my inner child that can't keep out of the candy jar.

I like to think that I am above board, a generally good person, and acting consistent with my faith and a socially accepted moral code. It's just not true.

Rather than acknowledge, my evil ways, I self-justify, blame others, and make myself feel good about destroying my family. It's a sick game. I meet my needs illegitimately, set off a nuclear bomb in my home, then tell myself everyone else is better off. The Bible calls it adding drunkenness to thirst.

God, please tear down every lie of self-justification. Strip our mental games and leave us with naked truth. We are a wretched bunch. Show us the stark reality of selfishness so we can own it, be forgiven, seek solutions, and make it right.

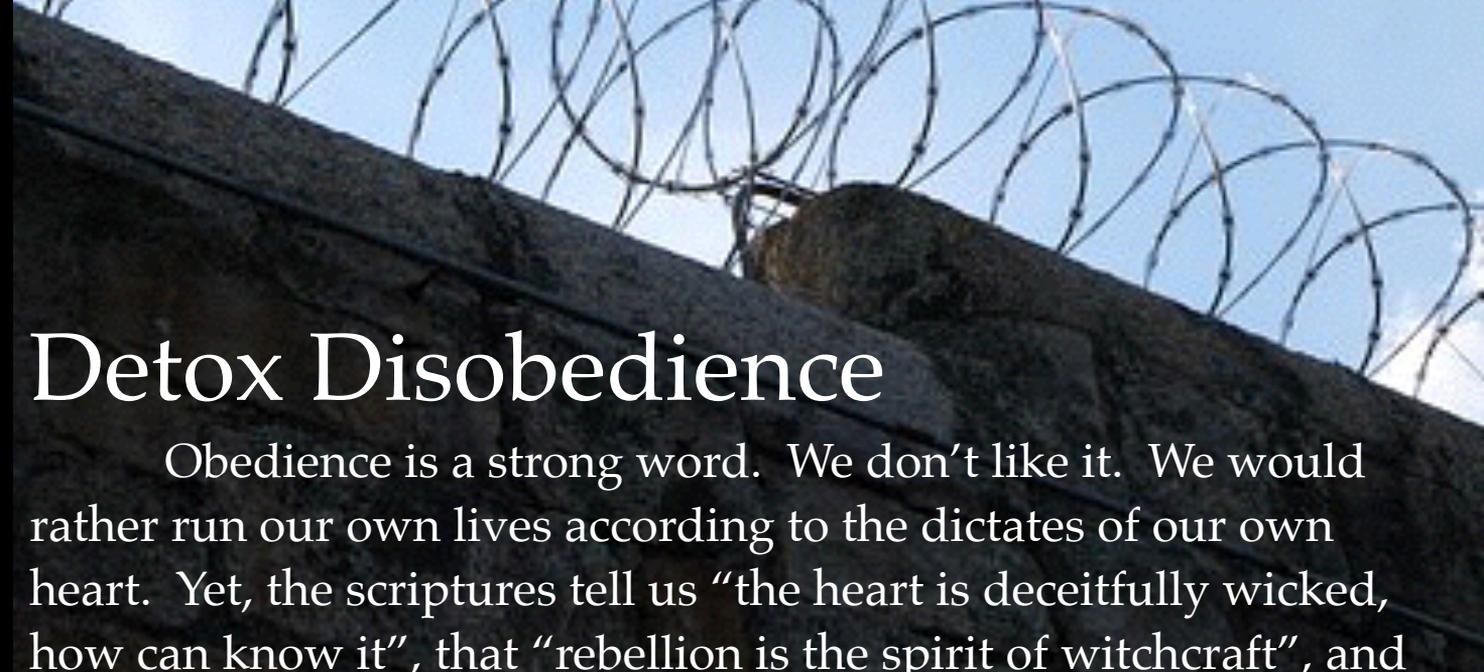
1. During your divorce, describe some of your non-Biblical acts?
2. Were you often blamed or shamed in childhood? How does that inhibit your ability to feel healthy guilt?
3. Describe some of your twisted thinking used to justify wrong.
4. What role does pride play in your self-justification?
5. Humility is the cure for worldliness. How can you practice greater humility?



A large crowd of men, likely Orthodox Jews, are gathered in front of a massive, light-colored stone wall. They are wearing dark suits and black hats. Some are holding papers, and the scene appears to be a formal religious or public event. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

And, the Lord
said, I will remove Judah
also out of my sight, as I
have removed Israel, and
I will cast off this city
Jerusalem which I have
chosen, and the house of
which I said, My name
shall be there.

Jeremiah 23:27



Detox Disobedience

Obedience is a strong word. We don't like it. We would rather run our own lives according to the dictates of our own heart. Yet, the scriptures tell us "the heart is deceitfully wicked, how can know it", that "rebellion is the spirit of witchcraft", and that we tend to do what is right in our own eyes rather than what is right before God.

God says, "If you love me, you will obey my commands." He also says that "obedience is better than sacrifice".

Many believers receive Messiah for salvation, they may even trust Him for their daily lives, but they may not be disciples who walk in obedience, and they certainly are not warriors who win others to the kingdom by walking in His commands.

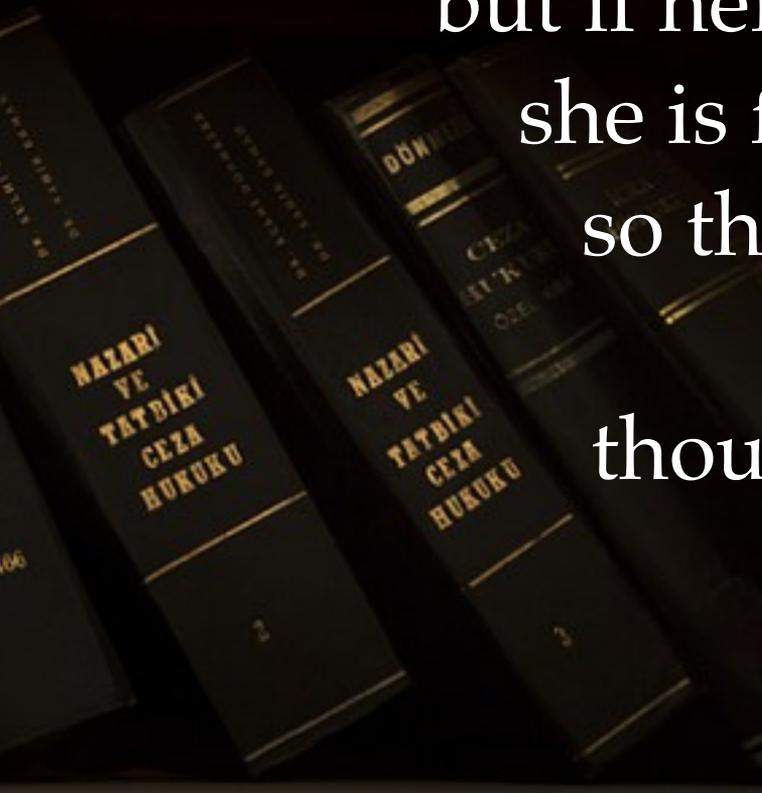
To trust and obey God is the key to detox. In fact, "the Father has no greater joy than to know that His children are walking in the truth."

Father, heal our wayward hearts. Place a soothing balm on the pain and pride that pushes us into the arms of the enemy rather than run to you for forgiveness. Comfort us. Encourage us in the ways of truth and humble obedience. Give us a fresh vision of your faithful, loyal love so we will never want to hurt your heart or offend you with our sin. Make us tender hearted with a strong conscience. Search out our secret faults so we may not sin against you or others in the face of your enduring love.

1. Where did you disobey God before your divorce?
2. How did you disregard His commands during your divorce?
3. How can you get right with God?
4. How can you make it right with those impacted by your sin?
5. In God's strength, how can you resolve to go and sin no more?

Know you not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. For the woman that has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So, then if while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband is dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no longer an adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Romans 7:1-3



Detox Remarriage

If you are divorced and your spouse is not dead, you have a problem. Think back for a moment. Remember the day you said your vows. Think about the words you swore and promises to your spouse, before witnesses and God — UNTIL DEATH.

Now, you may share any number of scriptures to try and wiggle out of your vow. You may say you are not under the law, but under grace. You may say “where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”

But, a one flesh union is God-ordained (Genesis 2:24). Luke 16:16 says remarriage to another after divorce is adultery. Mark 10:11 says the same. In Mark 10:2-9, our Messiah calls divorce an issue of hard-heartedness and says “let no man separate what God has joined.” Matthew 5:32 says anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 admonishes men not to divorce and divorced wives to remain single or remarry their spouse. 1 Corinthians 7:39 says “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives.”

Father, help us to keep promises. Let us not break vows. Make us faithful. Give us the strength to honor our commitments. May we swear to our own hurt and change not. Your yoke is not burdensome. Give us joy in every circumstance. Restore our marriages or let us serve you with undivided devotion.

1. Describe a time when you rationalized unBiblical choices.
How did it go?
2. What will it cost you to commit to the Biblical mandate not to remarry?
3. How can you keep a clean heart and not wish for your spouse to die so you are free?
4. How do you know that God’s grace is sufficient for singleness and the loss of sex?
5. What does the word “covenant” mean to you and to God?
How do you know?

When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Almighty, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your King is giving you as an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4





Detox Recycling

Don't rush into relationships. During this divorce process, you may be tempted to leap into another bed or even wed. Your inclination is understandable. Divorce is utterly devastating and there is nothing more intoxicating than a new liaison. Say no.

Once you part and join yourself to another, there may be no turning back. If you were drawn to the illicit, no matter how much you long for them, regret your mistake, or desire to re-unite, your former spouse may become the one person in the world you can no longer have.

If you are filled with hate, you may not care, but feelings are fleeting. Circumstances can change. While self-control may not be your strength, wait at least a year or two after your divorce to embark on any plans to re-marry. Interestingly, I've been curious how our Creator was able to divorce Israel and then remarry her. In my limited understanding, I can only imagine that when the Holy one of Israel, himself, died on an execution stake and then rose again on the third day, He did so of necessity to reunite with His beloved wife, Israel. In fact, planting the Jewish people in the land of Israel is the one thing the Almighty longs to do with all His heart and soul (Jeremiah 32:41). The Jewish people are His dream.

Father, forgive us for the defilement of divorce. Please give us strength not to compound the abominations we commit in your sight. Help us to understand that the wedding feast at the end of days is first and foremost, a Jewish one. Reclaim your bride.

1. Describe your self-control. Describe the self-control God wants from you?
2. Not knowing the rules is no excuse for breaking the rules. Describe your habit of reading the scriptures. Messiah said "Could you not watch and pray with me for one hour?" How can you increase your bible knowledge?
3. What can you do to close revolving sexual and spiritual doors in your life?
4. What steps can you take to fully heal any sexual wounds
5. What is more important to you, pleasing God or pleasing yourself? Why?

For where a testament is, there
must also, of necessity,
be the death of the testator.

For a testament is in force
after men are dead; otherwise it
is of no strength at all while
the testator lives.

Whereupon neither the first
testament was dedicated
without blood.

Hebrews 9: 16-18



Detox Death

I am so sorry for your loss. My condolences. I am praying for your comfort during this difficult time.

Life as I knew it is dead. Murdered outright, wasted away in agonizing apathy, or run over by the side of the road, hijacked and blown up — the methods don't matter. It is just dead. So, I drag myself through another day.

Hope deferred make my heart sick. I hoped for so much that will never be.

I know the joy of the Lord is my strength. I know that my emotions can't dictate my days. I know God loves me and has a good plan. I know. I know. It's still dead.

Father, comfort me. Be with me. You are the author of resurrection, the writer of redemption. All my days are in your book. I am asking you to give my life script a fabulous finish so my end is even better. Until then, help me cast these losses at your feet so I can heal. Let me honor this sadness while trusting in your goodness. May the death of my dreams bring you glory.

1. Have you ever lost a loved one? If so, how did you get through it?
2. Sometimes, it can feel impossible to pray. Call a trusted friend and ask them to pray with you.
3. Do something symbolic and metaphorical to mark the death of your marriage, such as buying your spouse roses, tossing bread crumbs in the sea, plant a tree, or donate to charity.
4. Write a song, poem, or do an art piece as a creative outlet for your grief.
5. The stages of death can be muddled and unpredictable. Ask God to bring you through them decisively, as rapidly as you can tolerate, and with total healing.



Only acknowledge your iniquity,
that you have transgressed
against the Lord your God,
and have scattered your ways to
the strangers under every green
tree, and you have not obeyed
my voice says the Lord. Turn oh
backsliding children says the
Lord for I am married unto you
and will take you one of a city
and two of a family, and I
will bring you to Zion.

Jeremiah 3:13-14





Detox Backsliding

Stop sliding back. Get a grip. Grab truth. Dig in. Hold your ground. Sin is a slippery slope. Scripture is your lifeline rope. There is an anecdote for backsliding.

Acknowledge your iniquity. Turn. Obey. Commit to God. Let Him lead you.

Sin always leads to separation. So, go and sin no more.

Because, God's promises are not unconditional. He says, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples." "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will bear fruit." If not, you are in danger of being tossed in the fire. In fact, many people will cry out to God and say "Lord, Lord". He will say, "depart from me I never knew you."

Father, apart from you we cannot hold our ground against decline and decay. Undergird us with strength of character. Send us other believers to pray and encourage us. Remove our lame excuses. Stop laziness. Do whatever it takes to get truth.

1. As you divorce, how can you know if you are a backsliding believer?
2. What are the repercussions of a backslidden life during and after divorce?
3. Why does God promise to detest and "spit out" lukewarm believers?
4. How can you be certain that you are known and belong to the Lord if you persist in habitual sin and divorce yourself from His commands?
5. If your spouse is backslidden, how can you commit to continue to pray for them?



The glory of this latter
temple shall be greater
than the former ,
says the Lord of Hosts.

And, in this place
I will give peace,
says the Lord of Hosts.

Haggai 2:9

Detox Your House

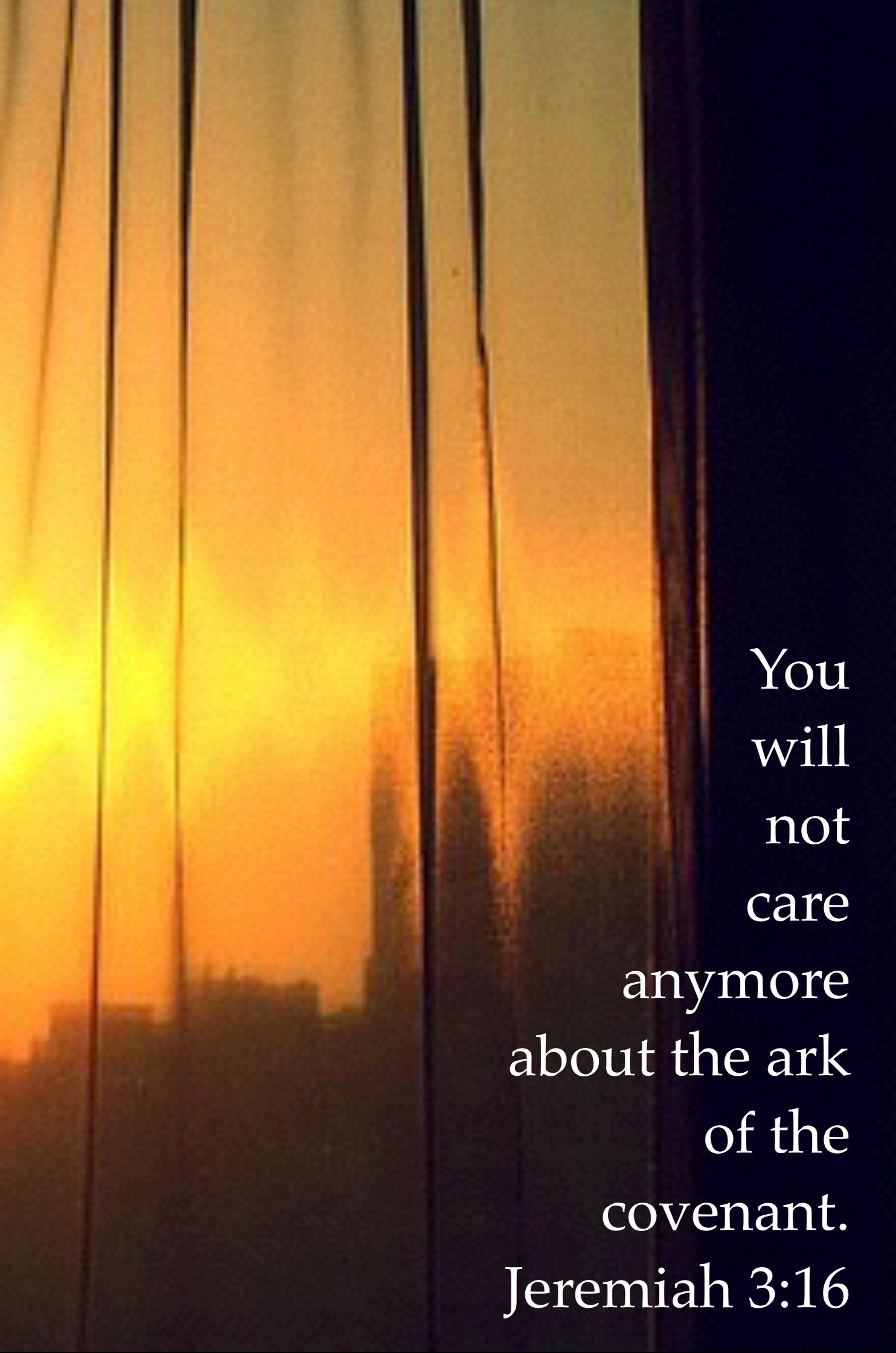
Divorce divides your house. A house divided cannot stand. You may even lose your physical house. Micah 2:9 is a strong inditement against this painful reality; “You drive the women of my people from their pleasant homes. You take away My blessing from their children forever.”

Houses are important to God. He devotes an entire feast in His desire to tabernacle and dwell with us. He even rewarded the midwives, who refused to abort infants, by building them houses when they rejected Pharaoh’s murderous commands.

God has a plan. The second temple could not compare with the opulence of Solomon’s temple. The Jews wept over the pitifully small effort. But, God promised greater glory in the second temple. The surprise that no one could foresee is that Messiah, himself, walked in that second temple. The King of the Universe talked and performed miracles in that place. He gave the building value; not the opposite.

Father, give us Heaven’s perspective on our homes. Help us to grieve the deep loss of being kicked out, sent away, torn, or relegated to a lower place. We invite you to guide us to our new home regardless of appearances. Give us your best place.

1. How can you mourn and grieve losses of home, family, and those blessings forever?
2. How can God gain greater glory in a smaller house consecrated to him?
3. How can you sanctify a living space to invite the presence of our King?
4. What scriptures enable you to trust God despite humiliating circumstances?
5. Ask God to help you make a list of attributes to guide your housing search.



You
will
not
care
anymore
about the ark
of the
covenant.
Jeremiah 3:16

Detox Stuff

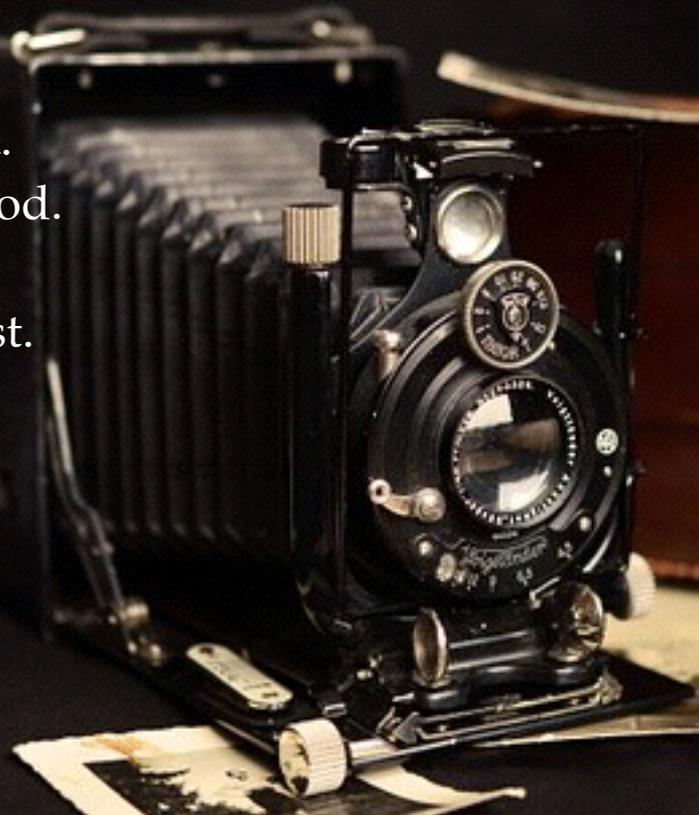
You've got stuff. Some of it is junk.
Some is priceless. Some stuff is good.
It is time to let go of anything
and everything that isn't God's best.

It's time to let go
of some of your treasures.
It's time to trade
the shadow for the reality.
Letting go is just plain hard.
Stuff carries emotional weight.
Stuff even facilitates worship.

A shake up of our stuff seems a severe consequence of divorce. While I am dismayed about leaving my home, I used this process to digitize old VHS tapes and favorite compact disks. I simplified my wardrobe and gave away items I never use. I keep a suitcase in my car and breathe easier with fewer possessions.

Father, you force us into new spaces and new places for our growth, our good, and your glory. May you turn this suffering into joy and make our shake-up a blessing. In fact, we ask for Isaiah 54 and, regardless of what we see, believe that we will enlarge the place of our tent. Give us discernment and let us hear clearly from you what we are to retain and what we must release with peace.

1. How can you discern what God wants you to keep and release?
2. What beautiful and precious items are you called to sacrifice? Mourn the loss.
3. What new beginnings and new blessings might God be bringing?
4. How can you find contentment and peace when leaving precious things?
5. Describe the freedoms you might find in owning less stuff?

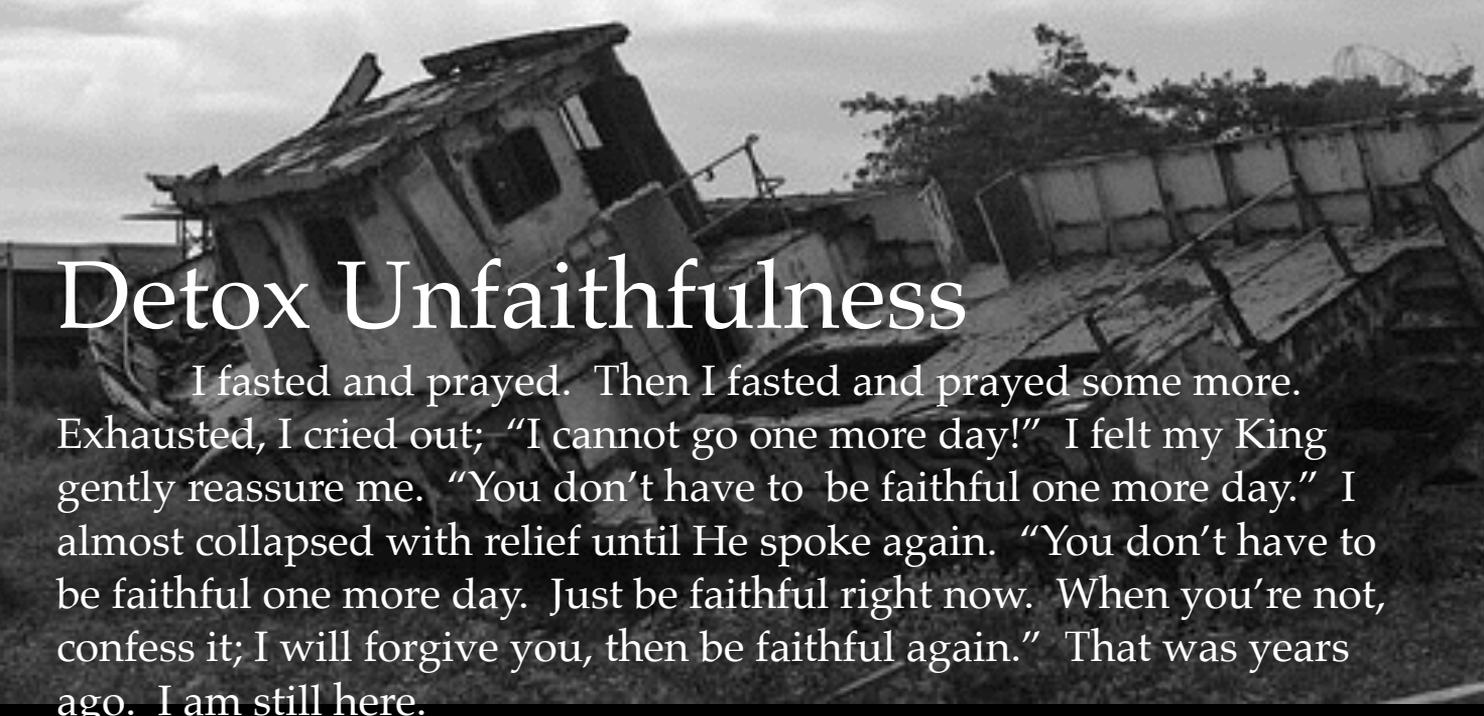




And you, who once were
alienated and enemies
in your mind
by wicked works,
yet now He has reconciled
in the body of His flesh
through death, to present you
holy, and blameless,
and above reproach
in His sight.

If you continue
in the faith.

Colossians 1:21-23



Detox Unfaithfulness

I fasted and prayed. Then I fasted and prayed some more. Exhausted, I cried out; “I cannot go one more day!” I felt my King gently reassure me. “You don’t have to be faithful one more day.” I almost collapsed with relief until He spoke again. “You don’t have to be faithful one more day. Just be faithful right now. When you’re not, confess it; I will forgive you, then be faithful again.” That was years ago. I am still here.

Faithfulness is a beautiful word filled with character. It connotes sacrifice, endurance, perseverance, and loyal love. Faithfulness is such a powerful word that the Almighty reserves it as the highest praise for a devoted life; when we face Him on judgment day, we will stand alone before perfect righteousness longing to hear His words, the highest honor we can ever attain, “Well done good and faithful servant.”

Adultery, on the other hand, is a nasty word. It connotes betrayal, moral failure, selfishness, weakness, greed. But, the reality for all of us is that we were unfaithful. We sinned. We dropped the ball. If we didn’t commit sexual adultery, we are surely guilty of spiritual adultery and running after lesser gods — our career, our money, homes, relationships, addictions. We fail to put Him first. So, it seems futile to seek His praise and impossible to obtain His approval.

Thankfully, the anecdote for adultery is so simple. Repent. Repentance is the remedy for unfaithfulness. If you confess your faults to Him, He is faithful to forgive them. If you confess your sins to one another, you will be healed. The truth will set you free. Then, go and sin no more. Turn. Reject sin. Walk in light. Father, grant us strength to repent.

1. List some of your lesser gods? Why are these your particular adulterous leanings?
2. What keeps you from repentance and rejecting spiritual or literal adultery?
3. Have you prayed for the strength to repent, live a life of love, and be faithful?
4. Are you self-righteous? Why?
5. Your Maker can forgive anything and give you power to overcome sin, what keeps you from forgiving yourself?



Behold, the days are
coming, says Adonai,
when I will make a new
covenant with the House
of Israel and with the
House of Judah.
Jeremiah 31:31

Detox the Old

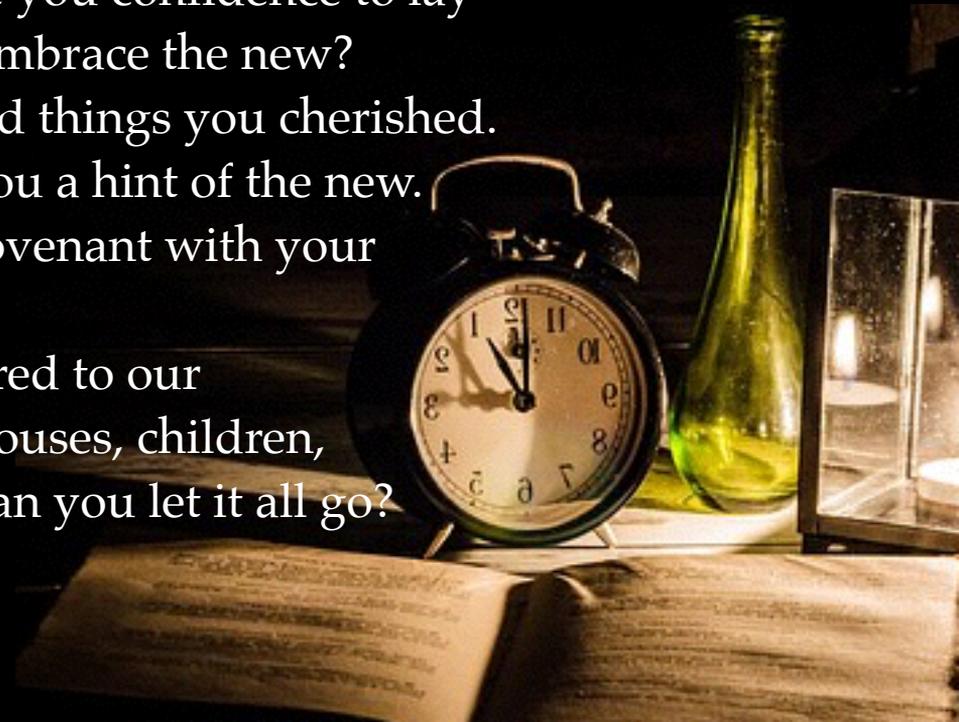
Some people and things get tossed out because they are old. It's easy to forget that so many good things are old — an antique book, an ancient place like Jerusalem, old friends, classic cars, an aged bottle of wine.

I love the portions of ancient writings that people call “the Old Testament”. Thank goodness so much of the New Testament is based in the old, that I never have to let go of those words I build my life upon.

But, there are some old things in my life I must relinquish. I must let go of my old life as a married person. I must let go of the old ideas about family and home. The old has passed away. The new is come. My service and worship will look different. The new will be better because my Father withholds no good thing from me.

Almighty Father, please help me to let go. Please hold my hand through this painful process. Please help me to embrace the new life you have for me. Hold me close. I know perfect love casts out all fear, but I am afraid. I am sad. Give me courage. Meanwhile, don't let me toss anything precious just because it happens to be old.

1. What old ideas must you release during your divorce?
2. What promises give you confidence to lay down the old and embrace the new?
3. Make a list of the old things you cherished.
Ask God to show you a hint of the new.
4. What does a new covenant with your Maker look like?
5. Many of us ministered to our Maker by loving spouses, children, and homes. How can you let it all go?





I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
I will betroth you to Me in
faithfulness,
And you shall know the
Almighty.
Hosea 2:19-20

Detox Loneliness

I am an extrovert. I love people. People energize me. Never in my wildest imagination did I envision that I would spend so much time alone.

In fact, one of my deepest dreams is a long table bathed in light, packed with interesting people, feasting and delighting in life and love. I have that long table but nowhere to put it.

I need a new vision of abiding with my King. I need to realize I am never alone. He is right here. He is with me. I can have an audience with the Perfect One any time.

Father, please give me a fresh perspective. Fill me with joy to abide with you. Let me set my heart on you forever so I have no lack and no fear of loss. May my soul bless you in contentment. Satisfy my hunger. You are married to Israel. You are married to me. I am not alone.

1. There are so many people who need love. Ask the Father how He wants you to fill your days in tender care for those who desperately desire community and connection.
2. What are some scriptures to bring comfort when you feel lonely?
3. Some people get bitter others get better. How will you ensure that your divorce leaves you more gracious, with deeper compassion, and more love not less?
4. Develop a prayer to turn away a spirit of loneliness. Mine goes like this "Lord, when I feel lonely, I pray you will comfort every abandoned Holocaust survivor."
5. I need help using my alone time more effectively. God, maximize this season in me.





For I do not desire, brethren,
that you should be ignorant
of this mystery,
lest you should be wise
in your own opinion,
that blindness in part
has happened to Israel
until the fullness
of the Gentiles has come in.

Romans 11:25

Detox Blindness

We all have blindspots. Our self-awareness is a little shady. Our character seems a bit cloudy. Our thinking is muddied. Perceptions can be murky. Theology is warped.

Such optical illusions are impossible to uncover unless the Creator shines the light. Until He does, we are wise in our own eyes even though we cannot see clearly.

Our blindness is selective and rarely proportional. The tiniest fault in our spouse is magnified; they were impolite or they didn't give me proper deference. They spoke in a harsh tone or refused to speak at all. How dare they!

Meanwhile, we minimize our own heinous acts of war. We drop nuclear bombs. We sleep with someone else. Life as they know it implodes. We decimate their personality. We destroy their dreams, then cry foul because they wouldn't take out the trash. We wince at our own slightest scratch, blind to their battered psyche and gaping emotional wounds.

Father, I invite you to enlighten my blindness. I have been in the dark with my sin. I ask you to show me the suffering I caused. Give me empathy. Teach me compassion. Give me the humility to ask for forgiveness and if my spouse will allow me, the strength to make it right. Thank you for this strange gift of suffering.

1. Why do your wounds seem so large while the pain of others seems so small?
2. What can you do to become more empathetic and more loving despite divorce?
3. Like King David, invite the Almighty to search your inner person for "secret faults".
4. The scriptures tell us to have "salt with our selves and peace with others" which means we must rigorously examine our faults while being merciful to our spouse. Try it.
5. It is your glory to overlook a transgression. Make a list of everything your spouse did to offend you and then purpose to forgive. Detox your wounds by repeating forgiveness as often as the memory continues to hurt you. Detox your blindness by asking your spouse how you hurt them and how you can make it right.

I meant that you are not
to associate
with anyone
who claims to be a believer
yet indulges in sexual sin,
or is greedy,
or worships idols,
or is abusive,
or is a drunkard,
or cheats people.
Don't even eat
with such people.
1 Corinthians 5:11



During your divorce, you may have an unrepentant spouse, mired in habitual sin, who wants to go to dinner. You've got a problem. If they are not a believer and you are inclined to dine and continue to win them to Messiah through your conduct, feel free. However, if they are a believer, think twice before grabbing a bite.

In our culture, we often fail to appreciate the spiritual dimensions of dining together. Messiah astounded Jewish leaders when he ate with the sinners and tax collectors. He freely fellowshiped with outsiders, as should we.

The problem is not with unrepentant unbelievers. The issue is people who call themselves believers who claim Biblical truth and yet remain in habitual sin without change. The Almighty instructs us not to even associate with them. Other passages even call for us to "turn them over" to Satan so that they may repent. Personally, I'd rather not "rat anyone out" to the Prince of Darkness. I choose to simply not eat with them and keep praying for Repentance to Acknowledge Truth.

Father, please show us how to walk in grace and truth. Show us how to hold the line and wherever possible, to hold the hand. If we must let go, help us to do so kindly. Fulfill our own obedience so we can free others from disobedience (2 Corinthians 10:6)

1. Have you ever felt like the scriptures might be too harsh or unloving? What benefits of tough love have you experienced?
2. Why is it kind to let people experience consequences for choices?
3. How might you and your witness be protected by wisely refraining from associating with other people's sin?
4. Again, scripture tells us that tolerated sin can turn into thorns, traps, and scourges until believers perish off the good land (Joshua 23:13). How might you be sabotaging your own blessings by defying Biblical truth? Father, please help me to surrender to your will.
5. Pray and ask the Father for specific scriptures to show you where to be tough and where to be tender as you detox dinner.

Detox Dinner





And he saith unto me, Write,
Blessed are they
which are called
unto the marriage supper
of the Lamb.

And he saith unto me,
These are the true sayings
of God.

Revelation 19:9

Detox Marriage

I used to love the idea of marriage. I dreamed about it. I loved going to weddings. I had so much hope. I wanted to believe in selfless love. I had faith.

Today, marriage hurts my heart. Marriage left a bad taste in my mouth. I wanted shelter, transparency, a place to be known and loved, and cherished and intimate. What I got was a long protracted war. Apart from divine intervention, marriage would have destroyed me. I don't know how to detox marriage.

I guess I shouldn't blame marriage. I am sure marriage does its job as a fine, God ordained institution. I know it is a foundation of society and essential for children. It shaped me.

I also know that marriage is so important to my Maker that He chooses a wedding to culminate all of creation. Messiah started His mission making wine at a wedding. The whole redemptive story crescendos at His marvelous marriage. In fact, even now, He tells us He is making mansions for us in Heaven which is a crucial component of any Jewish betrothal.

Father, please help me to attain your view of marriage. I want to love what you love and hate what you hate. You love marriage and call it a great mystery where a man and a woman become one to reveal the union between Messiah and His bride. Oh Father, even as my old dreams dissolve, bless and strengthen marriages for your glory. If you died so you could remarry Israel, then I may remarry too. May Messiah reclaim Israel unto Himself and return. Come quickly. The Spirit and the Bride say come.



You can't break me.
You can't make me break faith.

Detox Divorce

Turn a nightmare
into your finest hour.
Trust your dreams
to your divorced deity
while praying for His.

ISBN: 978-1-5136-2606-2

