

Eph 4:19 – having become callous – numb

Emotionally Numb

We recently received a call from a friend requesting grief counseling. The person writing and requesting help had just experienced the sudden death of their spouse and child who had been hit head on by a drunk driver. To quote: “I am completely numb right now” indicating the instinctive, defensive reaction to the hurtful news that family members had suddenly died.

Col 3:21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart (*athumos*). Without passion or feeling - numb

As we have discussed, the sin – natural reaction to emotional pain is to tell yourself to stop feeling it and making yourself numb. God’s solution to hurtful events is to think them through using His perspective based on the eternal plan and divine decree. Unable to confront our problems with truth, we go numb for a time while we attempt to process the event, reaching a conclusion about it to believe. Intended to be a short term strategy, we simply remain numb and never resolve our confusion and hurt beyond the surface level. IN fact, when we have used defensive strategies for a long time they become part of our basic approach to life and we build new ideas on top of fear based beliefs. Because we are numb we don’t realize how unhealthy we are until we end up unable to function emotionally or relationally, focusing only on our doings, going through the motions of living. It is impossible to enter fully into a love relationship with God or anyone else when you are numb. Please consider making a decision to remove your numbness mechanisms so that you can feel your life again.

Deciding to Feel

1. DM’s while instinctive choices that normally occur below the level of conscious awareness, they are choices none the less and choices can be charted & changed.
2. Practicing awareness of our own thoughts (visual & verbal) enables us to recognize that we are not operating as God designed – free from OSN control influenced by GHS
3. Observing self from the outside inward, watching our overt & verbal behaviors motivated by our emotional states created by our visual & verbal thinking, we can realize that under the surface of our thinking lie false ideas that are sabotaging our relationships.
4. As we become aware of our numbness that we continue to choose moment by moment, we can choose to remove the emotional wet blanket that we are keeping on top of our feelings.

5. We choose to allow ourselves to feel, a little at a time, more and more along the way until we are operating emotionally more openly and honestly.
6. Removing the cover of a past trauma can cause us to re-experience the pain of that trauma but God is with us and will give us the wisdom and ability to change our minds about the pain.
 - a. Remember that the only reason we felt pain from the event was because we chose to interpret the event as painful – we lost something we had chosen to value – idolatry
 - b. When we change the interpretation of the event in question, we change the emotional state that we associate with it
 - c. God has always been in charge of the circumstances of our life and what He allows is always able to be used for growth, not to damage us.
 - d. When we interpret the adversities of our life from His point of view, we can see that what was allowed was for our benefit and rather than interpret the event as a painful tragedy, we can see it as a beneficial blessing & be grateful for it.
7. The purpose for allowing ourselves to fully feel again are to operate with total honesty and to be able to uncover suppressed pain tied to human viewpoint interpretations of life.
8. Paul used the event of being arrested to look deeply at his human ambition & how he had kept the logic producing it as part of his Christian motivation – he wrote Phil 3 about those things he had previously valued, he now considered as dung in comparison to Christ.
9. Peter initially became very discouraged because of his 3 denials but after the Lord told him to get back to work, he gave up self pity, forgiving himself & realized the depth of his weakness.
10. The mechanics of removing the DM of denial & emotional numbness is to bring your consciousness into the moment and tell yourself to stop numbing & let yourself feel whatever you are feeling, even if it is painful – feeling pain is much better than feeling nothing at all.

Are your emotions numb? Have you turned down the intensity of your feelings to get along with your life so that you don't bust out crying or smash something? Emotional numbness is a huge clue that you are covering up pain from the hurt that comes along with life as a sinner in the devil's world. Are you willing to trust the Lord and allow yourself to feel the pain in your heart? To feel the pain so that you can rethink the conclusions you believed that are causing the pain? Guilt, shame, regret, fear of the future, self doubt, bitterness, hatred of self/others....

Vs 19 having given themselves over to unrestrained sinful desire

19 having given – **paradidomi** to surrender oneself, let yourself go, remove the restraints

- Rom 1 – God gave them over to their lust & degrading passion & within the permissive will of God they gave themselves over to

Rom 4:25, 8:32 Christ was given over to be our sacrifice for sins; 1Cor 13:3 & 15:3 the word of God was given to Paul who in turn gave it to the church; 1Tim 1:20 bel's delivered over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme;

19 sensuality – **aselges** – **Selges** (sell/gayce) was a city in the ancient world known for its people being models of self-discipline and restraint – a/selges = unrestrained desire

- Unrestrained lasciviousness – surrender to sins of the flesh or to fantasies of sins of flesh
- Unrestrained ascetic lust for control, order, purity & finger wagging morality, OCD

Vs 19 producing all types of impure – unrighteous behaviors.

Vs 19 with greed – **pleonexia** – unable to get enough, insatiable pursuit of more

1. When we harden our hearts toward God and His word we go down a road of corruption & enter into a process of degeneracy that addicts the soul to sin nature lust.
 - a. Moral Degeneracy: self-righteous religiosity & finger wagging human morality
 - b. Immoral Degeneracy: unrestrained pursuit of lascivious pleasure – food, sex, etc
2. The farther down this road we travel away from God, more pleasure is required from whatever our strategies to gain gratification.
3. The road away from God is a journey of frustration and suffering – we minimize the suffering through numbing and try to maximize gratification through unrestrained pursuit of our sin nature strategies.
4. Verse 19 is an extreme description of a soul having abandoned all restraint provided by GHS & entered into a mind numbing, dissatisfying pursuit of more and more pleasure gratification from your OSN trend.
5. Futility of the mind (vs 17) describes this empty, meaningless lifestyle where we enslave our desires to more and more extreme types of OSN pursuits.
 - In my youth I became obsessed with golf, indulging in it at every opportunity, never able to get enough – nothing wrong with sports but it can't replace God

- Another person becomes obsessed with exercise and healthy living to the point that every aspect of their life is dominated by it – can't even have an ice cream
- Another becomes addicted to religious activities, pursuing every aspect of church life with unrestrained greed, unable to be at peace without being in church

Greed:

1. **Greed** (or **avarice**) is an uncontrolled longing - hunger for increase in the acquisition or use of material gain (be it [food](#), [money](#), land, or animate/inanimate possessions); or social value, such as [status](#), or [power](#).

- Covetousness - Unrestrained hunger for more of whatever you have attached your desires & faith; no such thing as enough, there must be more

Lk 12:15-21 – beware of greed; parable of the Rich Fool – couldn't get enough, more, more

2. **Greed originates from the heart, believing that more will produce satisfaction**

Mark 7:21 For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come-- sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

The opposite of contentment – **arkeo** – enough **Phil 4:11** Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

- Contentment comes from believing & telling self that “I have enough”
- Greed is a belief in the heart that says “never enough, I must have more”

3. **Greed believes that happiness in life comes from one's possessions of every type, viewing everything including the people as possessions.**

Luke 12:15 And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

4. **Greed attached the vacuum of the heart that cause our insatiable desires to the things of this life and demands that we have more and more – can't get enough – idolatry.**

Col 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

- Greed attaches full capacity for hunger & thirst intended for God to earthly treasures.

5. **Greed often motivates people to manipulate, scam & flatter to take advantage.**

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1 Thes 2:5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with pretense for greed.... **2 Peter 2:3** and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart **trained (exercised)** in greed, accursed children;

- When we want to much from each other, we unintentionally manipulate each other trying to induce the other to change to be more accommodating.

Summary

- a. The moment we harden toward God, His word or deviate from His perfect will we begin to degenerate into a state of ever increasing corruption.
- b. Prior to the age of accountability, before we choose for or against God, there exists a protection against the influence of evil.
- c. Once we choose to reject either the idea of God's existence or the gospel of Christ, the vacuum in the soul opens & pulls in all forms of corruption & evil.
- d. As we are influenced to operate from our OSN & OMBS, more and more pleasure or self-righteousness is required to bring gratification to the soul.
- e. We are driven into fantasy and pursuit of happiness through either lascivious or ascetic pleasure strategies, eventually trapping ourselves in lust with no gratification – addiction
- f. Life with no joy and only pain drives us to become callous and numb.
- g. Eventually we are influenced to seek our happiness in this life through earthly treasures and blessings that give us less pleasure for more investment.
- h. Greed is the essence of pursuing happiness that provides no satisfaction – continue thinking that a little more will do the trick.