

Depression ■ The Science, the Scriptures and the Path to Life

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the complexities of human emotions and the impact of different chemicals in our bodies, such as dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins. It emphasizes the need to humbly approach God, endure through difficult times, speak out loud about our struggles, and respond positively to break destructive cycles. The message highlights the importance of recognizing negative behaviors, seeking God's grace, and making intentional changes to overcome sinful patterns.

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6, Psalms 30:4, Psalms 32:3, Matthew 7:13, Psalms 42:5, 2 Corinthians 10:12, Lamentations 3:21

Topics: "Emotional Healing", "God's Grace in Struggles"

Description

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Transcript

One of the craziest things I ever was a part of is that when you join the army, they do this really, I don't know if they still do this, but they do this crazy thing in basic training. So that you could understand chemical warfare, they have you go into this gas chamber with a gas mask on, and they put tear gas in there. And so then you're in there, and you'll start to feel like the leaks of your mask and everything, and you start to feel your skin burning.

And then all of a sudden they say, now take your mask off. And you're supposed to take your mask off, and then experience what it feels like to have this attack of a chemical warfare. And it's terrible.

And I remember suddenly, I couldn't breathe, and I tell you not to try to hold your breath, and don't gas, because then you take this huge breath. But who can stop it, because it's burning and everything. And finally, I'm starting to take small breaths, and I realize I cannot breathe.

So then they tell you to do some jumping jacks, and get down in push-ups, because they're trying to make sure everybody's breathing and everything. And I'm thinking, OK, this is affecting me more than anybody

else. I'm going to die.

And there's no way human beings would do this to someone else on purpose. What I'm feeling is much worse than what anybody could possibly be feeling. And then as I'm crying, I'm trying to make it over to the drill sergeant to beg my way out of the gas chamber, and try to save my social security number.

I'm looking over, and I'm realizing, wait, everybody's dying. And so it made me feel a little better. And so finally, he let me out, and it was a terrible, terrible experience.

I wouldn't recommend it. So I'm going to talk today about feelings. I'm going to talk about depression.

And the thing that I bring in this analogy with is that it's good for us to realize we all feel. We all have these emotions, that the more we're honest about it, the more we're open about these things, we'll realize that we're not the only ones dying in the middle of the gas chamber. If you recall, it's been a while, because I've been on the road and different things.

I'm doing a sermon series on the place of emotions in the spiritual life. And the last message that I did was on religious affection and enthusiasm. And we talked about the revivalism and the different feelings that God gives us in worship and praise.

And I thought one of the best quotes from that was from Jonathan Edwards when he was talking about the balance of emotions in worship and emotions in things. And he says, Jonathan Edwards put it in his very good book called *The Religious Affections*. He says, there are false emotions, and there are true.

Because a person is very emotional does not prove that he has any true spirituality, any true religion. But if he has no emotions, it proves he has no true religion. I think that's a really good balance statement there.

Yeah, just because somebody can be saying they have all these emotions doesn't promise anything. But if you're real and you're not feeling, it's hard to imagine that it's real. Well, today the name of this message is depression, the science, the scriptures, and the path to life.

I kept going back and forth and just calling it feelings, the science, the scriptures, and the path to life because it's not just negative feelings I wanna talk about today. But it seems like most of us, we're wanting to know where do we categorize those blue feelings that we have. And so I thought I'd just name it.

There's gonna be some positive emotions too, but depression, the science, the scripture, and the path to life. I'm gonna be looking at the different parts of this, the science of it. And then I'm gonna be looking at some of the chemicals and different things like that, the scriptural, and then how we make changes, positive changes, and practical things in each of these categories that I'm gonna try to break down into.

So first, let's talk about the science of depression or the science of emotions, the science of feelings. Now, as I was doing some research in this, there's camps in this whole thing. And some people are very against the idea that chemicals in any way affect us.

I found some quotes here, ones by a big homeschool advocate, Voddie Bauchman. Y'all heard of him. And he says, most Christians don't know that there is no such thing as chemical imbalance.

Okay, and then John MacArthur has a very strong statement. And he says, he puts it this way. The stampede to embrace the doctrine of secular psychology may be the most serious threat to the life of the church today.

These doctrines are a mass of human ideas that Satan has placed in the church as though they were powerful, life-changing truths from God. Most psychologists epitomize neo-Gnosticism, claiming to have secret knowledge for solving people's real problem. Some of them even claim to perform a therapeutic technique they call Christian counseling, when in reality, they are using secular theory with biblical references tacked on to treat spiritual problems.

It comes very strong in both of these and many other, particularly from the fundamentalist camps, wanted to say that there's no chemical things going on and that the modern psychology that's coming against the church is off. And here's the thing, we would agree with a lot of those concerns, particularly, and I really wanna stress particularly the idea that the answers are outside of the Bible, that we have to rely on science and everything just to understand ourself. And I think that we would agree with them that the word of God, and that when we do counseling, we come from the word of God and from scripture.

That being said, to ignore that there's chemicals that God has used in these things, to ignore these things is also a mistake. A few years ago, many years ago, actually, I caught a flu, a bad flu, and I ended up with a paralyzed vocal cord. For six months, I had zero voice.

I mean, not even a whisper. I could hardly drink because my vocal cord was completely paralyzed. I worked with one of the ENT doctors, I worked with him in surgery and anesthesia, and as I met with him after first just thinking, oh, I'm gonna get over this, and finally, and realize this is getting worse and worse, and by the time I made it to him, he took a scope and looked down there, he says, your vocal cord's paralyzed.

And I said, well, you know, I whispered out, you know I'm a preacher, and he knew from our conversations during surgeries. I said, well, lay it to me, how is it? And he says, it's 50-50. You could either just start getting your, we're gonna give you a bunch of steroids, you could get your vocal cord back if the nerve damage isn't too bad, or you could spend the rest of your life with a paralyzed vocal cord.

And I said, wow. So I started cranking the steroid that he gave me, and let me tell you, there's something to emotions and chemicals. I mean, I was really moody, and I thought, if this is what it feels like to have a chemical imbalance, I suddenly have a lot of pity on people who go through these things.

You think of postpartum depression, you think of different things that obviously a lot of chemical stuff is happening, how dare we ever say that chemicals are not affecting us? I was very moody. Ask Tonya. So, you know, that being said, I'm concerned, I am very concerned that as we begin to explain the mind and the heart and things, that we do so apart from God.

We do this in history, too. There's a term called methodological atheism. Methodological atheism is where we give our method, we present our method of history or method of science or method of whatever totally void from God.

And many times, Christians that are in the academic world will try to do these things to kind of speak the language of academia. But we do that to our detriment when we leave out God. We are created by God.

History has been governed by God and any form of methodological atheism that describes the human phenomena, that describes history without God is wrong. Also, the other side of that, I've experienced things and there's some things I can't explain with science. There's been even cases that in my years of doing anesthesia, working in a secular hospital with secular people, that there's been some things that go

through there that even those people, they would come to me and say, Dean, that guy or that girl has to be demon possessed.

So these are totally secular people. And some of the things that we're just could not understand, I'll never forget once there was an anesthesiologist and he'd come running to me after, she had an interview with a patient. It was a lady who had a lot of strange manifestations and she went to do the interview.

He was in there talking to her about 20 minutes and he came back sort of white faced. And he said, Dean, there's something weird going on in that room. And I said, what? He said, my watch stopped the entire time I was talking to this lady.

That I went in and the entire time I was there, the watch stopped and everything she said was strange. And I never met the lady or did I in a different case. And there's different people who have said things and I agree there's things that I think today when we look back on the scriptures and we look back on the demon possessed people and the spiritual things, it is too easy to just put a scientific explanation on things and say that there are demon possessed people or things aren't like that.

So I don't, when I began to get into the science of this and look at the different chemicals and the different ways that I think that God is using, I don't wanna go too far. I do think there are things that science cannot explain. I do feel that those are part of it.

But when I look at science, when I come through and I see things even scientifically for me and my experience is it usually I try, it lifts me up to even worshiping God more. I've said, because we understand the paintbrush of God, when we look at to understand the flickering of the Northern Lights or a beautiful sunrise, you know, and if you look at a gorgeous sunrise, you know, there's that little scientific voice in the back of your head that says, it's just dust particles. You know, it's just dust particles or something like that or the Northern Lights and we have the scientific understanding.

If we allow ourselves not to be wowed by God's presence, even though we might know some ways that he uses different practical things, I think we hurt ourselves. God is an awesome God in nature and alive and through everything we do. And because now we have some sort of scientific explanation of his paintbrushes, it doesn't make it any less true or any less amazing or any less magnificent as we ponder these things.

Maybe I'm using it out of context, but there's a passage I like to take comfort in and mixing this science with the amazing things of God is Psalms 18, 15. You can tell me if you think I'm taking it out of context, but I read it once and it hit me. It says, the channels of the water were seen and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

Now it either means that he's just blasting it and we're seeing the foundations of something very magnificent, but I wondered in this, could there be something that in his rebuke, he lets us know some of the ways of the operations of science or something like this? I don't know. So as we look at these things, I also think through my life and my pastoral experiences, my time with people, and I'll tell you this. There are some things that have been very difficult and some very insensitive things have been said.

And when you talk about a subject like this, it's usually we're involving very vulnerable people or more so we're involving very vulnerable parts of ourselves, of how we feel. And I'll tell you, there's been very difficult cases. And when I've gone through that, there's been some insensitive things that I think as radical

churches, we have to be very careful about.

What I've noticed is that many hard cases, some of those really hard cases of people that have gone through a lot, you kind of want them just to leave. And that's really, really wrong. You kind of just hope, oh, so-and-so is gone now.

And yeah, he's going to that funny counseling system. And what makes the most insult to injury is that often I've found amongst us radicals that oftentimes we can't help somebody. So they go somebody where they're trying to get help and then we heap insults on them of they're going to this place that's getting the help.

And we just have to be careful. It's hard. And many of these cases are difficult.

And our spirit, when we're dealing with some of these hard things, should be always pastoral. A passage that really rebuked me years ago. It's from Jeremiah 23.1. It's a very strong rebuke to pastors of something that's hidden, hidden when you're dealing with difficult cases.

And Jeremiah, the rebuke in Jeremiah 23.1 says, woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people. These are the people that should be given the spiritual food.

You have scattered my flock and driven them away. And here's the part that got me. And have not visited them.

Behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doing, saith the Lord. And I will gather a remnant of my flock out of all countries, whether I have driven them, and will bring them again to their fold. And they shall be fruitful in an increase.

And I will set up shepherds over them that shall feed them. And they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed. Neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

I felt very rebuked that there was a lot of people that I was just glad they're no longer here, and I haven't visited them. I haven't searched after them. And that spirit within me has to be fought.

It's natural. It's a lot of work. It's the 80-20 law, or maybe the 90-10 law, where 10% of the people are taking up 90% of your time.

And we have to be careful that God has created every one of us beautifully and wonderfully made. And as we look into some of these things, it's hard, it's difficult, but we have to be very careful about God's rebukes here. Now, as we look at some of these different, I'm gonna give up the typical chemicals that affect our moods and everything.

Let me give you a little warning. All of us are affected in every one of these. I mean, when you start looking at some sort of these different abnormal behaviors, the tendency is to go, oh, okay, that's me.

And so I remember when I was taking abnormal psychology, Tonya and I were taking abnormal psychology in college, and the professor warned us, now, when you take this, I'm warning you that you're gonna kinda relate to all the conditions, and so that can happen sometimes, so be careful. Yeah, Tonya and I were like total basket cases by the time we entered abnormal psych, because we had filled ourself up with every one of the conditions. Oh, yeah, that's me, that's me, oh, that one's me, oh, that's me, and

so we have to be careful, but the good part is this, it's like the gas mask.

Realize these are things that all of us are going through. Now, to say that, one more disclaimer. I am not against medicines.

I am not against it. I have seen it that is used at a time when people need help, and I've seen people do it responsibly, and I've seen people do it, and they get to a place where they need those kind of things, and I'm not against it, and so I recognize these chemical things, but in this, I think there are some areas that we can make little goals and little ways to advance that we can look at the word of God and see how we can get out of some of these ditches that all of us get ourselves into. We just wanna make those very important disclaimers as we get to it.

So let's look at the science, the pastoral, and the change. Now, the science. I am a funny artist, but I'm gonna try to draw up a brain here if I can.

Maybe I should get one of our students, but how's that? All right, not bad, huh? Okay, so as we look at this, there's four positive neurotransmitters that affect our mood. We have dopamine, we have serotonin, we have oxytocin, and we have general endorphins, and they affect an area of the brain down here, and there's some channels up here, and these different, we're gonna talk about each one of these, dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphin as how these chemicals affect the brain. Now, I'll say from the beginning, it's sort of an oversimplification.

They mix, and there's different parts, and humans, we're all very complex. So these are oversimplifications, but they bring some nice, some discussions on how to look at some different categories of things we all go through. There's also something else that's very good to know, and in your brain, you're filled with just millions and millions of these little connections.

They call them synapses, these little firing charges, and every one of those millions and millions basically break down into this little area where there is those little, like the dopamine in here, coming out of this side and then being caught by this side. Now, the way things typically work is you can either increase the amount of this coming out, you can somehow get it squirted directly synthetic into this area in between, or you can somehow get it lasting longer on this little receptor, and all those will bring the next synapse down the way. And so all these different dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphin work, more or less, oversimplified in something like this that can affect us.

And so, now, so here's the thing. So this is scientific, people, it's, you know, everything from positive thinking people to psychiatrists, to doctors. Simon Sinek talks about this.

Different psychiatrists use this thing. It's an obvious and oversimplification, but it's obvious these things are happening scientifically. But here's the first thing that I wanna bring out to you.

You know, when we find ourself hurting, when we find ourself pathological, you know, you're dangerously hurting, you're in a ditch, you're not doing well, you know, what do you do about it at that time? And although it's very clear that if you have a deficiency, you know, in this hormone, or if you're going through something and you have, it is gonna cause you to feel really bad. This has been scientifically proven. But how do you fix that? How are you gonna walk through that is the question.

And I think that there are some things that both from a scriptural side and people give for encouraging people to get out of habits as helps us to look at these things. And here's one thing to keep in mind. When

you make a path, so you have all these different paths going through here, you know, just literally millions and millions.

I don't know, Finny, do you know how many synapses do you have? It's actually in the trillions. In the trillions, okay. In the trillions.

And so you're making pathways all the time. You're making, you know, instead of just finding your way from here to here, you know, you're finally getting familiar places. And there's a saying that says neurons that fire together, wire together.

And you begin to make habits and pathways that are like habits of thinking. And so as we get into different things of our life, different things start to affect us and we begin to make habits. And there's ways that we can respond to that.

Now, if you go to the doctor and the doctor says that you have high blood pressure, there's different reasons that you can have high blood pressure. You can just have some sort of genetic thing that's going on. It could be because you're overweight.

It could be from several different reasons. But the response could be then is what are you gonna do about it? If it was because I'm, if it's because I've got some sort of genetic thing and my mother had high blood pressure, now I just suddenly have high blood pressure, there's not a lot I can do. But if the truth is it's because I'm overweight, there's maybe some things that I can do.

And so I'm gonna look at some of these cases that we, as we break it down, is maybe there's some things that we can do that can make things differently. And so instead of just quickly responding to the pathological, that maybe I could lose some weight, maybe there's some things that could help me. So I started to think, looking at the scriptures and I went through the scriptures that looked at being down and that, and I came up with a new acronym that I think will try to help here.

And it's the one, it's the word hear. So you're going through a hard time, you're wanting to hear from God. And so I have this acronym here, H-E-A-R.

Okay, and so the first one is to humble yourself. The next one is to endure. The next one is to ask.

And then the last one is to respond. And I'm gonna go through these as the way I saw them in the scripture. So let's look at some of the scriptures.

Turn your Bible to 1 Peter 5, 6, 7. Humble, endure, ask, and respond, hear. Going through a hard time, I wanna hear. I wanna hear from God.

What am I going through? Let's look at some of the scriptures. In 1 Peter 5, 6, and 7, therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him for he cares for you. See, what you have here in the scripture, the one thing we don't wanna do is to just say everything's just my chemicals.

It could be that God is trying to get your attention. And God gave us emotions, he gave us feelings, he gave us hearts to feel and hear and understand God. So the first thing, your first response should be humble yourself in the sight of God.

But then endure. If you've passed this state with your clean conscience, endure. If there's anything I can give to you out of my 53 years of experience, a lot of, that's how old I am, is that wait.

Many times, this hard thing that you're going through is a time thing, and there's a cycle. If you can endure it and you can wait, there'll be joy in the morning. He says, and he will exalt you in due time, casting your care upon him, and he cares for you.

Look for another one I have here in Psalm 30. It brings up these sort of things, and I'll get more into this asking and responding. That one didn't hit the ask, but then the respond is to put your care on him.

I've humbled myself in the sight of the Lord. Okay, Lord, is there something you're trying to tell me? I'm enduring, realizing, okay, I'm still feeling really bad, God, but I'm realizing this is a time. In due time, I'm gonna feel better.

I'm gonna get to the asking. Then the next one is responding. I'm gonna actively cast my care on you and wait for you.

But look at Psalm 30, verse four. Psalm 30, verse four. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, for his anger endures but a moment, and his favor is life.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Again, another one that really just talks about this time. And I'm telling you, are you feeling tempted to sin? Are you feeling I can't stand this bad, yucky feeling anymore that he's telling us it is a cycle, that something that God can help us through this? My next message is actually gonna be on spiritual anguish and how this is actually a spiritual thing.

We're not made to feel great all the time. Now I'd like to do the ones that really bring out this idea of asking or announcing, is another A. Look at Psalm 32, three through five. Psalm 32, this is a really important one.

Turn to this one, Psalm 32. David was an emotional guy, right? He was an emotional guy. And I think that's why God really liked his honesty and his raw ability to be just so real.

And listen to now Psalm 32, three through five. So here you are, you're going through a hard time, like David was, and he says this. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groanings all the day long.

For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was turned into drought of summer. Selah, and he keeps going.

I acknowledge my sin to you and my iniquity. I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

So here's the thing. The point that he's bringing out here is that when he was silent, he was rottenness to him. But when he began to speak, when he began to praise and when he began to, David like talks, preaches to himself.

It's one of the incredible things about David. He preaches to himself, why are you thinking this way? Why are you being downcast? Why are you acting this way is something that he does. And so this ask, announce or another A is announce is to literally to say and to speak out about what you're going through to God and to yourself.

Psalm 42, five is another one really strong with the same thought. Psalm 42, five. Anyone ever gone through a hard time? Try David's response here.

Psalm 42, five. Listen to the way David talks to himself. Why are you cast down, oh my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him for he is for the help of his countenance.

That's the idea. So here, the idea of realizing you're going through a really hard time. You're experiencing this thing.

Speak literally, speak those things to yourself. Now there's a difference between talking to some weird mystery language and trying to preach to yourself. And what I mean is mystery language.

Okay, so obviously there's, if you're talking to some kind of voice that's out there, that's pathological, that's maybe demonic or something. That's not what I'm talking about at all. But what we do see in David is him rebuking himself, literally out loud, correcting himself, talking and reminding himself that the way he is feeling is not rational, it's not right.

And he says, why are you cast down? So maybe the next time we're depressed, maybe the next time we're going through a hard time. Dean, why are you cast down? Why are you getting so lethargic? Why are you not doing that? And he would literally say something out loud. I found an interesting quote by Martin Lloyd-Jones on this very thing.

Martin Lloyd-Jones says this. He says, your self is talking to you. Now the man's treatment in Psalm 42, what we just read, was this.

Instead of allowing the self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, he asked. His soul had been repressing him, crushing him.

So he stands up and says, self, listen for a moment. I will speak to you. Do you know what I mean? Now Lloyd's preaching and he's saying, do you know what I mean? If you do not, then you have but little experience.

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle you, yourself. You have to take yourself in hand and you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul, why art thou cast down? What business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, this is Lloyd-Jones, abrade yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself this, hope thou in God.

Instead of murmuring and muttering in this depressed, unhappy way, and then you must go on to remind yourself of God, who God is and what God is and what God has done and what God has pledged himself to do. That's how we deal with ourself going through this hard time, speaking very specifically, realizing I'm not where I should be. Now this is not listening to the voice of the accuser.

We do have to realize that we know that Satan is a roaring lion and he continually accuses us and says, you're no good, you can't do it, you know you're a sinner, you know this is wrong, and his job is to continually rebuke you that way. Revelation 12, nine through 11 says it beautifully, and this is such a great day. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.

He was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him, hallelujah. Then I heard the loud voice saying in heaven, now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ has come for this reason, for the accuser of our brethren, who accuses them before our God, day and night has been cast down. And they overcame him, how? By the what? By the blood of the lamb and what else? And the word of their testimony.

So this accusing voice that's coming to you, this accusing thing, asking, announcing, speaking out loud is what David's technique was there, is saying and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives to the death. Powerful stuff. Here, humble yourself before the Lord, endure, this comes in cycles, but can endure those things, announce or ask, speak out loud and respond, respond.

Let's look for a minute at just some of those chemicals and how they affect us and how we can make little steps to use these chemicals that God has given us. They weren't given us to defeat us, they were given to us to be triumphant and to be victorious. They get out of whack sometimes, I admit that.

But look at this. So one of the first one we look at and one of the most powerful ones, the ones that make a lot of media is the one of dopamine, dopamine. Dopamine motivates us to a reward or to take action to get the reward.

It's the surge you get when you find your keys, when you have finally fulfilled something, when you get that parking spot or those kind of things, it's something you get this little surge of dopamine and you feel good. And it's trying to get you to continue to go on your goal, to keep going and to keep fighting and to keep your goal going. If we live continually in this flooding of dopamine, you'd finally wear out.

But it's trying to encourage you to reach your goal. It's interesting, I found, that studies have been proven on animals and that they show they have low levels of dopamine, that these animals always opted an easier option. So if they had a goal where they knew this way would give them more food, but they had to go around there and around there and there or just go over here, with low level of dopamines, they always take the easier route.

And so there's something that God has given us in this beautiful and fearfully made wonderful hormone that gets us the ability to know, I'm gonna take the hard route. So I call this the narrow way hormone. The narrow way hormone.

And look at the way Jesus talks about enduring the narrow way. In Matthew 7, 13, He says, enter the narrow gate. Now that hurts.

There's a great martyr's mirror quote that says, the martyrs entered the gate so straight that they left their skin on the post. It's an awesome quote. Enter the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it.

Because narrow is the gate. Watch this now. And difficult is the way which leads to life.

And there are few that find it. Not only does this have eternal consequences, it has consequences in life. Do you wanna live? Do you want a life? And so He's having us to endure these things and to go and realize this, I'm gonna have to deal with this hard feeling.

I'm gonna have to deal with this and set some goals that are gonna make us towards learning how to take this right step. The thing with this dopamine is that it's addictive. And without the dopamine, we have this

angst.

It's a narrow way. It hurts. And I'm feeling like I need a hit.

And to get that hit, to mask that hard feeling, we tend to do things that are destructive. We drink alcohol. We go gambling.

It gives that thrill. We get on our cell phone. We try to have a little goal in something that's petty.

And we're always looking at this kind of a thing that's hurting us. And this is not healthy. And so even secular people tell us, and particularly in the scripture here that tells us that needing to know how to understand how the dopamine works is to set goals that are achievable, smaller goals.

So when you have those little goals, you have a little celebration. Ah, I finished a test and I did good on it. I did my paper.

Or I finally got my homeschool portfolio done with my children. I cooked a nice cake. And take a moment of celebration in those times and say, yeah, I accomplished that.

And those are healthy ways for us to work within this beautiful hormone that God gave us. And it creates ways. Now, if you know you have bad habits, I know I'm on the cell phone too much.

I know I'm the rat that's going and taking the easy thing. And I know I need to take the hard thing. Here's the trick.

It's gonna hurt. And scientists say it's gonna hurt for like 45 to 50 days. It's gonna hurt.

But if you continue to train yourself and going and using this goal the right way, it creates these pathways that are good behavior and suddenly that starts to feel better. Let me ask you students that are here. You can clearly see a look on your face between second semester and first semester.

I mean, it's just so obvious. And it's like when I usually ask you, you notice how many people you'll ask. Well, is it a lot easier? And what does most every one of you ask when I ask you, is it easier? You say, what? It's not really easier.

It's the most common answer, time management. How many times do you hear that? It's I just learned how to do my day better. I learned how to study.

I got my habits. That's that hard two months where your habits were this way. Now you're training a pathway and using this dopamine in the right way to make new paths that feel good to study and to take that harder path.

It's awesome. It's a great way to do that. The thing that happens with this is a lot of times without the right, when you finish this goal, one of the warnings that they come with this is there's a something called the dopamine Elijah syndrome.

Anybody heard of Elijah syndrome? And so what happened, remember the story of Elijah? Elijah was very active and very strong in the things that he was doing and accomplishing. And then when finally he finishes his goal, he was depressed. Now it's important to look at James.

James tells us in James 5, 17, Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. And he prayed earnestly that it would not rain and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. The Bible wants you to know that you're just like Elijah.

You're made of like passions. But it tells us in 1 Kings 19 that after he did all these incredible things and finally all the things that he could get to and finally he's getting now some resistance from Jezebel and he gets to the mountains. And what did he say? He says that when he saw, and 1 Kings 19 verse one, and Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and now he had executed all the prophets with the sword.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, so let the gods do to me and more also if I do not make your life as a life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. And when he saw that he arose and ran for his life and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah. And then when he got there, he said under a juniper tree and he says, it's enough, Lord.

What does he say? Let me die. Let me die. Take my life.

And then he says, what? I'm no better than my father's. Little serotonin there in two. So this is normal.

This is something that you're really charging here. You gotta be careful sometimes after you've accomplished something. They say that we should be able to have a next goal.

When you graduate or when you finish, you get married or when you have your baby, what's your next goal after that and it's good to have the next goal in lines. Let's look at another one. Dopamine is one of the main ones, serotonin.

Serotonin is the one that as it's oversimplified, but look at the idea of being important. You've accomplished something. You're important.

Now serotonin is one of the biggest things that we fight in antidepressant medication here and because it's an easy one to stimulate in different ways. But the idea, and it's not important in a bad way, that there's something about this understanding where you're supposed to be and the accomplishments that you've made, not listening to the voice of the accuser and living in this properly. The Bible says that you should love your neighbor.

How? As yourself. As yourself. So that means you can't hate yourself.

You know, pride is thinking too highly about yourself. Condemnation is thinking too low about yourself. Both are, guess what, thinking too much about yourself.

That the idea of you are to have a healthy animal, a healthy response. Looking at the different animals and looking at serotonin, they found that animals, that when they find a territory, a certain area, that they can chart that spikes in the serotonin levels are there, that you feel they've accomplished something, that you've done something, and there's a healthy way. Granted, there's unhealthy ways and prideful ways to be that way, but it's good for you to realize what things God has done for you.

And this is a warning I have for us. This is an easy one to get messed up. Particularly, I don't know how it is for women.

I think it's probably the same, but it's really big for men. There's something built into us of wanting to be accomplished and wanting to accomplish something, and when that doesn't happen, this hits us really

quick, and we start to get really weird. Man, it doesn't matter what you've accomplished in your life, we're always looking at the next one.

I'll give you the president, and you're looking to be the best president, there's something built in, and when we don't get this, it hurts. It hurts, and that hurt is okay, but we have to be careful and understand that, and people fill this up with different things. They get mad and say, I quit, or I'll get drunk, or I'll hurt myself, but it's something that we deal with.

I'll tell you something, and I see it in practical. I've never seen a church, personally, I'm trying to think if I've ever been an exception, I've never seen a church go through an ordination that it doesn't cause a bump in the church. I don't know why it is, and I think this is it.

There's a famous story of Antony. Antony's kind of a mythical story of a monk that was in the desert, and the story was the demons were trying to get Antony to sin by lust, by wealth, by anything, and they were just war out, just trying for weeks to get Antony to sin, and they went to tell Satan, and said, sorry, we can't do it. We can't get him to sin, and Satan kind of laughed.

I'll get him to sin in 30 seconds. Forget it, there's no way, watch, and he said, okay, so Satan goes up to Antony, whispers in his ear, your brother was just ordained bishop in the other city, and he walked away. There's something about it, and men, we have to be really careful about this.

It doesn't matter what you've accomplished in your life. There's something that settles on us that equates our worth in a way that's, there's something built in good about that, but that's just an area that's typical for us to fall. Position, serotonin is very related to position.

In a good way, being a father, being a husband, doing good at your job, having a promotion that's in the right way, and all those things, these are good things, but we have to be careful with some of the things that come with that. Rejection from a girlfriend, rejection from a boyfriend. People go through this, but how are you gonna respond? So you didn't get the ordination.

Now you're sitting here, we have an ordination here, and you didn't get ordained, and you're thinking, they don't like me. Church doesn't like me. I'm a loser.

And Satan puts all these lies into you, or a promotion, or a boyfriend-girlfriend situation, or whatever it is, and you get really depressed. Here's a quote from Abraham Lincoln. It was probably one of the most amazing ones of dealing with really deep, depressive feelings, but able to use those and understand what's going on and use it right.

So here's the thing that I'm trying to get. We all go through this, but instead of getting in a negative loop and going further, and further, and further down, what I'm trying for you to do is to see how do I recognize what's going on, see it as the chemicals and different things that are happening, humble myself before God, and do or realize this is just a time, say something out loud, and then respond in a positive way. Abraham Lincoln said this.

His was gonna be, or eventually wife, had broke up with him, and he wrote a letter to John Stewart on this. He said, I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be a cheerful face on the earth.

Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell. I am awfully, regretfully, foreboding, I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible.

I must die or be better, it appears to me. And Lincoln was going through very hard. If you look at his life, in 1816, his family was forced out of his home, and the young Abraham Lincoln had to support his family.

In 1818, his mother died. From there on, a litany of failures. He fell businesses twice.

In 1831 and in 1833, resulting in a debt that took him 17 years to repay the debt. He was engaged for marriage in 1835, but his fiance died. In six months, he had a nervous breakdown.

As a politician, he started to try to get involved in politicians. He lost a total of seven elections at various levels, ranging from the state legislature, a legislative speaker and senator, the vice president nominee, and between 1832 and 1856. Can you imagine trying something and losing seven times? He won one or twice small things, but then finally in 1860, he becomes the president of the United States.

Now, this was a moody guy, but he understood it. He didn't understand the chemicals, of course, but he understood something that in that moment when he said, I am going to die, that he endured this, and there was something inside of him that made him respond in a positive way. Serotonin flows when we feel a significance or important.

Healthy, attention-seeking behavior is good for us to do this, and one of the things that we need to do is to remind ourself of the promises of God. Remind yourself of the accomplishments that God has put into your life, and grow in that. Second Corinthians 10, 12, for we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who condemn us, but they measuring selves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.

So reflecting on your past accomplishments, reflecting about how God has helped you is the way to deal with this very difficult day. What's the name of the book of the Bible, small book, that's named after an anguishing, terrible, dreadful feeling? It's called, thank you, it's called Lamentations, and if there's, the high point of the whole book of Lamentations rests on this passage. Now imagine what Jeremiah is going through, and then he says, this I shall recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.

The Lord's loving kindness indeed never ceases, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in God.

So remembering this promises, remembering these things is powerful. Just two more little things. The community, the family hormone, the community hormone is oxytocin, here, oxytocin.

This is triggered when we trust those around us. Oxytocin is a powerful hormone. Like in babies, it's just when the, at the time of baby, when you contract, the contracting of the uterus releases oxytocin, which makes milk come in, and also makes moms really love their babies even more.

And this same hormone is released when we feel a sense of togetherness, when we feel a sense of family, when we feel a sense of belonging, oxytocin is released. And when we don't have this, we seek it in really weird ways, like Instagram accounts, or one of those Minecraft things, that your community, your life is this community, this fake community that doesn't exist, and you actually feel something with that. You need to recognize that this is not healthy.

And so, therefore, you have to put away your cheap oxytocin-releasing communities, and draw good, strong pathways, and how's that gonna feel when you first put away your Minecraft, or your Instagram, or your whatever, or your bad boyfriends, or your bad groups of people, or whatever, what does it feel like at first? It hurts, it hurts bad. But with that, you then make new paths that are right, and then that creates the good oxytocin and the good way to do this, and this is good. This is what community is supposed to do.

This is why people stick to games. This is why people have military. This is why there's a sense when you get people that belong to some cult, and they can't get out of the cult, and they know it's wrong.

They know it's wrong to be in the cult. They know they're in a bad relationship. They know their boyfriend is dangerous.

They know that their behavior is bad. They know all these things, but they can't break free from that. I'm telling you today, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you can be free from that, but it's gonna hurt.

It's gonna hurt for a while, but if you humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, endure this painful time of change, speak out loud of the thing that's going on, and respond in a positive way, it's going to be better for you. It's going to be better for you. That oxytocin, that thing.

There's a verse that hit me by reading, I don't know if any of you read the book Andrew Korn's on Divorce Remarriage, and there was a passage in that book that just got me. I was stunned by the way he used that. It was Matthew 19.

Matthew 19, it was describing the divorce from a remarriage situation, and the eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. You know the scripture, the Bible says, but he said unto them, all cannot accept this saying, but to those who it has been given. For there are eunuchs who are born from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who are made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who are made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

He was able to accept it, let him accept it. What got me about this is Korn took this, and he said, this is what he said. He said, to such it is given.

And there's some things we can't explain that you've been through in your life. Some people have been through things from their mother's womb. Some people have things happen to them because other men have done that to them, and some have done it because of choices that you've made for the kingdom of God's sake, and it's hard, it's bad.

Eunuch making is not supposed to be good. And so in that, Korn's brought out the point, and I was just like, really? To such it is given. In other words, and I'm not saying that God did that to you, absolutely not saying that, or God's responsible for that evil, I'm not saying that, but what I am saying is that you don't have to be the victim.

You don't have to spend your life saying I'm a victim because something happened when I was born, or something happened because of people did this to me, or I made this choice, and you can change your life, and you can get out of this bad behavior and this bad sense of community, this bad sense of serotonin, this bad sense of thing, and make a choice that's positive, that's positive. All right, let me get to the last one, is endorphin. Real quick on oxytocin.

Sometimes also radical churches, I'll give us a warning, there's something really powerful about being a group, but we have to be careful sometimes that we don't create our group by hating those that are different than us. I remember in high school, in my Richland High School over here in Fort Texas, in Richland High School, our rival was, who was it, Tonya? Halton High School. Thank you, Halton High School.

Halton was terrible, and we were the Richland Rebels, and they were the Halton High School Buffaloes, and you had this hatred for Halton High School. I mean, we would do, I never did, but we did pranks, I mean, huge pranks, we'd go back and forth and all that kind of things, and it was just creating to make this unity that we had that we were not Halton High School. That's carnal.

The church doesn't need to be unified by what we hate. We can be unified by what we are come together, and that's real and good and healthy, oxytocin. All right, endorphins.

Finally, endorphins, the last one. Endorphins are what you get when you hurt yourself. It masks things.

It covers pain, and so endorphins, you can get, like, anybody ever had an ice headache? I get them really easy. I know, it's kind of funny joking on our, when I get a slurpee, and I like, you know, it goes right to my head, and I'm like, oh, my knee's going, ow, but afterwards, you get this response, you get endorphin, and some people, they call it a runner's high. People are running and running and running, and finally, they're like, I feel great.

Never quite had that. Maybe once or twice, but they say it's great, and there's a feeling that comes to this, and endorphins are given to us in pain, but let me tell you this. This can be one of the most destructive substitute things.

When we're in anesthesia world, and we look at this, the damage of doing morphines and opioids and things like that to replace and to mimic that pain is very real. I can think of patients that within a week in the hospital, that you started giving them morphine because of some terrible pain, and by the end of a week, you see a kind of addiction to this that is very dangerous. The trend now in anesthesia is to stay away from endorphins, morphines, and those types of things, opioids, as much as you can, but there's different ways that we even treat ourselves to get this endorphin.

One is self-harm by hurting yourself. Today, people cutting themselves. These are demonic ways, thrill-seeking behavior, driving fast on a motorcycle or doing something, that these are evil ways to get the endorphin that we are getting when we're needing this thing, and we have to be very careful about this.

This is bad, and let me tell you a scary one that you don't think of, complaining. Scientists have said that complaining, research from Stanford University has shown that complaining releases this norepinephrine and the endorphins that come from the trail of all this, and this releasing cortisol and these different things that release from the complaining, and research from Stanford University has shown that complaining literally shrinks the hypothalamus, hippocampus, excuse me, an area of the brain that's critical for problem-solving and intelligent thoughts. Damage to the hippocampus is scary, especially when you consider it's the same place for your thinking, it's affecting for Alzheimer's, and a habit of complaining creates the fight-and-flight responses in you, which then gets endorphin that you get, and then becomes a habit.

If you're a common complainer, you're getting your endorphin in a negative way, just like if you were scratching yourself or taking a bad drug or these types of things, it's not healthy, it's not healthy. So that's what the chemicals did. So the last section here, I just wanna show you something real quick.

How does this affect us in everyday stimuli? Coming to an end, sorry it's so long. Here's what can happen. You start off with this bad feeling, okay? Whatever it is, you've got this bad feeling, and this is either because your group dynamics is off, your goals are not met, dopamine group is oxytocin, acceptance is serotonin, or you're just bored, and it's endorphin, and you're feeling bad, and so you fall into sin to help that bad feeling.

You're feeling yucky, you're feeling trapped, you're feeling painful, you're feeling lost, you're feeling worthless, and so you fall into sin, and so you fall into pornography. Pornography is a whole message, how it fills you with these different dopamines and different things, and it's a powerful drug, and you fall into pornography, men. You fall into outbursts of wrath.

You're eating, or you're shopping, or you're taking risky behavior, whatever it is, you sin here, and it's usually indulging. You think, it's not like a trickle, trickle, trickle. Usually it's like when a person, when you fall into pornography, you're like, oh, that's fine, you can fall into it, or shopping, you fall into it, or maybe you've dealt with pornography, but now you start coming home, and you're mad, and you're angry, and you're still not dealing with those bad feelings.

So then here's what happens. You feel guilty. Now watch now.

In the guilt phase, you make promises, oaths, and tears. This is endorphins, the crying, and the guilt is good. This is the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

But this is the time that you have got to react and do something. You've got to respond. You're guilty, because here's what's coming every single time next.

Foolish confidence, foolish confidence. You suddenly, you don't feel guilty anymore. You've asked for forgiveness.

You've confessed it at the church. You've done something, but you didn't change your habits. You didn't get rid of your cell phone.

You didn't change your eating habits. You didn't change your friends. You didn't change your study habits.

None of those things. You felt guilty, you confessed, but now you've got foolish confidence. I'm okay now.

I can handle this. And then the bad feelings hit. I'm telling you, people spend their whole life in this circle, going around and around.

You've felt bad feelings again, and you indulge, and usually it's an indulgement, whether that's alcohol, whether it's pornography, whether it's anger, whether it's shopping, or whatever, and then you're back in the circle again. You can break this. You can break this, hallelujah.

You can break this. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, realizing that this bad feeling that every one of us here, just like when I was in the gas chamber in the army, that it hurts, and yeah, we're all going through this. It's for a time.

It's for a time. Speak to yourself out loud. Announce what's going on.

This is not right. This is not a good feeling. Tim, Dean, why are you getting attracted to looking at pornography? Why do you wanna, why am I feeling like I wanna pick up my phone and look at something bad? Speak to yourself out loud.

Why do I feel like driving fast on the road? Why do I feel like hurting myself? I'm gonna rebuke myself out loud, and then respond and accept God's grace in this. Wherefore, seeing we are all compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. So amen.

So those are the three parts that I wanted to bring out in the message is the science of feelings and of the different things we go through, the pastoral responses, and the change. And let me give close with these last two verses again. Why are in you despair? Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, the help of my countenance and my God.

And lamentations, this I will recall to mind. He's speaking out loud. Therefore, I have hope, the Lord's loving kindness, the Lord's loving kindness indeed never ceases, for his compassion never fail.

They are new every morning. Endure. They are new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore, I will hope in him.

So thank you very much. The next message I would like to look at, anguish, spiritual anguish, abandonment, and the spirit of adoption. Amen, let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have so wonderfully created us. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. And I pray, God, that every one of us can realize that we're all going through these feelings.

We all have these temptations. You've created this this way. And Lord, we know, we look at David's example and Jeremiah and these saints of God, and we thank you for this.

We thank you for the great cloud of witnesses. And we, Lord, we wanna now be able to go strong and lay every weight in the sin that we see as a besetting sin that wants to attack us and get us. But we don't have to do that, Lord, because of your greatness.

We don't have to listen to the accuser of the brethren. We won't accept that negativity to our minds. And we love you, Lord.

And we thank you. And we thank you for speaking honestly to us, Father. In the words of Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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