

THE EMOTIONAL CUP

You can only hold so much emotion. When your emotional cup overflows with painful emotions, the obstacles to intimacy manifest. The major fillers of our emotional cup are:

1. HURT: AKA sadness, pain, disappointment. Basis for many of the others.

Antidote: comfort.

Must be emptied by God and others. Comfort can come from spouses or others, as we talked about. Also directly from God (see handout).

Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

2. ANGER: AKA resentment, bitterness, disgust, frustration. Based on hurt, because anger is a response to past hurt. It's a tougher, safer feeling form of hurt. Rarely, it's righteous anger. It's usually self-protective. And we go so quickly from hurt to anger that we don't even notice it. But the problem is, comfort doesn't work at the anger level. We have to return to the pain so that we can receive comfort.

Antidote: forgiveness.

Must be emptied by us. No one can do it for us, though they can help. Being angry "with" someone usually doesn't help to empty his/her cup.

Ephesians 4:31-32: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." [Get rid of anger = forgive each other]

3. FEAR: AKA anxiety, insecurity, nervousness, panic, distress. Based on hurt, fear is a response to expected future hurt.

Antidote: Perfect Love

Must be emptied by God and others. This is a chief function of the family of God. Nearly always related to action and the fulfillment of God's promises.

1 John 4:18: "Love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love." (NLT)

4. GUILT: Some people call it "conviction" when they feel that God is directly bringing up something they feel guilty about.

Antidote: confession

Must be emptied by us.

James 5:16: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

5. FALSE GUILT: feels like guilt but not based on actual wrongdoing. Typical example is when kids think it's their fault that their parents got divorced. Sexual abuse also creates a lot of false guilt in the victim.

Antidote: truth

Must be emptied by God and others through God's truth and an outside, wiser perspective.

Acts 24:11-13 is an example of Paul standing up for the truth about his own actions and refusing to accept guilt for them.]

6. CONDEMNATION: AKA shame. Feels like guilt but not relieved by confession

Antidote: truth that is consistent and confirmed

Must be a team effort. God and others present the truth, but we must receive the truth through faith. Often requires a group of God's family and time to let the truth sink in. (This is often the point of salvation for many, when they allow God to address their condemnation and trust Christ for salvation. But it can also be a strong emotion in the life of a believer.)

Romans 8:1-2: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

7. POSITIVE EMOTIONS: AKA joy, pleasure, peace, happiness. There's not much room left for positive emotions when our cups are full of painful ones.