

THE MATTHEW MINISTRY

Freedom in Christ

Ministry Explanation

FACILITATED BY MIKE SNYDER AND JANE BARZ

Matthew 13: 14-15

“You will indeed listen, but never understand and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes; and listen with their ears and understand with their heart and turn-and I would heal them.” Matt 13: 14-15

In Matthew Jesus's apostles ask him why he always speaks in parables to some of the people. Jesus explains that these people's heart is dull and they are hard of hearing and they will not hear him and turn to him to be healed. In other words, they have hardened their hearts. Because of this they cannot understand the message of Jesus. They are blind, they do not hear and they do not understand. Jesus goes on to explain that if they would turn their heart to Him, he would heal them. When we get angry or hurt we often harden our hearts to others and to God. We will not listen to others or to God. Jesus promises if we would turn our hearts to God, He would heal us.

Example – Being hurt by a brother, father, cousin and then having a hard heart towards all men.

Personal Story – Shelly grew up with a shaming father who was critical of her and as an adult she has quit several jobs with male bosses when they give her feedback that seemed critical and even though she knew they were trying to help her

Our ministry is designed to help you turn your heart to Jesus to receive the healing and freedom he desires for you.

Key points to Remember:

1. When we get hurt and harden our hearts, it becomes hard to let go of the past.
2. Hurts are on a continuum from experiences of feeling left out, not important, bullying, to physical and or sexual abuse or worse.
3. When we harden our hearts, we begin to shut people out.
4. Taking our hurts to Jesus (heart), will lead to freedom.

The Matthew Ministry

Guiding Principles

These are the principles of our ministry.

1. Many times we feel stuck in a negative emotional or behavioral pattern and cannot seem to exercise control over it. Our experience tells us the behavior is connected to a previously unresolved experience.

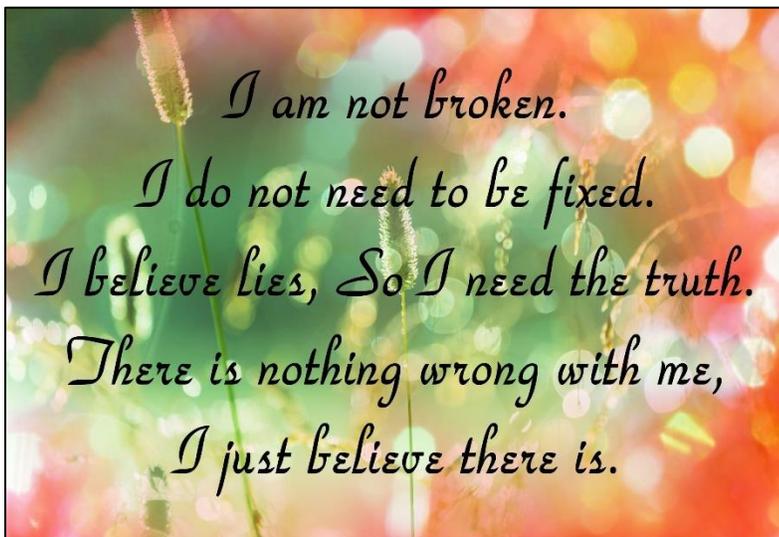
Personal Story – Shelly has quit several jobs she liked because ‘even though I got good reviews at work, once my boss said something I thought was critical, I felt like I wasn’t good enough, just like with my dad.’”

2. Once we receive freedom in our earlier experiences it becomes easier to control our current emotions and behavior.

Personal Story – Once Shelly got freedom from the belief that she wasn’t good enough because she couldn’t perform to her dad’s high standard she was more able to say “no” today and less likely to work herself to the point of burnout to keep from feeling ‘I’m not good enough.’”

Key Points to Remember

1. Look for previously unresolved experiences when we have trouble controlling current behavior
2. Freedom in earlier experiences leads to freedom today.



Most people cannot read this and believe it. We were made in God’s image and likeness. We are not ‘broken’, but most of us believe we are.

Our life experiences taught us we are damaged or broken. That is a lie, but many of us believe it to be true. We live like that.

We are not broken. We are made in God’s image. We need the truth of who we are in Christ.

The Experience/Behavior Connection

Experiences Shape Our Beliefs

We all have things that happen to us. Some are good and some are bad. Those experiences shape our beliefs about ourselves and the world around us. We have emotions about those beliefs. Our emotions drive our behavior.

Experiences shape our **beliefs**.



Beliefs create our **emotions**.



Emotions drive our **behavior**.

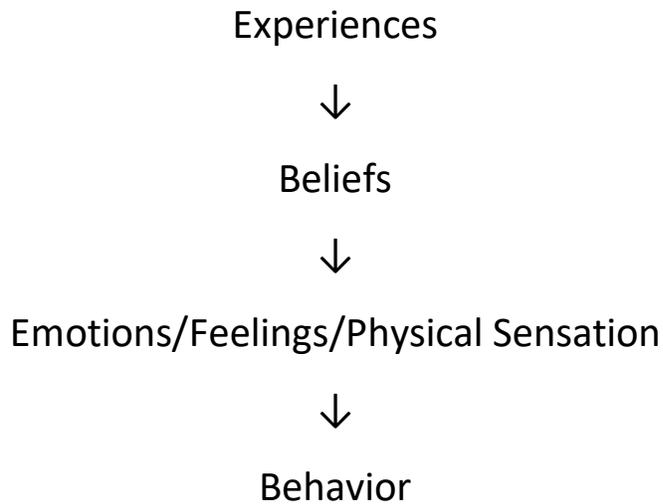
Personal Story – Jason sought freedom because whenever he felt slighted he would become enraged leading to: racing mind, clenched jaw, and a red face. The last time this happened he got caught cut off in traffic and got so angry he chased the person down and confronted them, almost leading to a fight. Police were called. He scared his wife and children and he was almost arrested.



Our feelings equal the gas that fuels a car to make it run.

Key Points to Remember

1. Our life experiences shape our beliefs
2. Our beliefs have a corresponding emotional and physical sensation
Examples:
 - A. The belief that I don't matter or am not important leads to feeling shame and physical sensation in the stomach, eyes looking down, avoiding people
 - B. The belief that I'm not safe makes us feel anxious/nervous and leads to a tight chest and racing mind.
 - C. The belief that things are unfair makes us feel angry and leads to a red face, tightness in jaws, hands, necks and high blood pressure
3. Our feelings are the driving force behind our behavior.



Key Points to Remember

1. Negative or painful experiences lead to negative beliefs about ourselves and our place in the world.
2. Negative beliefs have a corresponding negative emotional/physical sensation
3. Negative emotions tend to lead to negative or sinful behaviors.

Personal Story: Lisa's parent's divorced when she was three because dad left mom for his new girlfriend. Dad promised Lisa she could stay with him once he got his own place. However, he never did have her come live with him and over time he has less and less contact with Lisa. Lisa began to believe there was something wrong with her. She felt a sense of shame and had a pattern of dating boys who were unfaithful to her and ones that tended to use her because she believed she deserved to be treated this way. When she was treated this way it affirmed her belief, "Something is wrong with me."

Let's apply Experiences → Beliefs → Feelings → Behavior to Lisa

Experiences ↓	→	Parents divorced when she was 3. Dad promised to come get her, but he did not. Over time he started a new family. She had less and less contact with him. ↓
Beliefs ↓	→	Something is wrong with me. I do not matter. I am not important. ↓
Feelings/Physical Sensation ↓	→	Shame/looking down all the time. ↓
Behavior ↓	→	Let people take advantage of her. Her boyfriends got her to do their homework for them, she gave them money and they were unfaithful to her. ↓

Review

Bad or painful experiences



Tend to create negative beliefs about self and our place in the world



Those beliefs lead to negative feelings/physical sensations. Such as shame, anger, hurt/headaches, upset stomach and tightness in our body etc . . .



Those feelings and physical sensations tend to lead us to be self destructive or sinful. Such as addictions, not saying no or letting people use us, self-harming etc.

Key Points to Remember

Positive Experience ↓	↔	Experiences ↓	↔	Negative Experience ↓
Positive Beliefs ↓	↔	Beliefs ↓	↔	Negative Beliefs ↓
Positive Feelings ↓	↔	Feelings ↓	↔	Negative Feelings ↓
Positive Behavior ↓	↔	Behavior ↓	↔	Negative Behavior ↓

What is the Root of My Behavior?

We might ask ourselves, “Where is this coming from? Why do I do what I do?” Simply work back from your behavior. How do you feel? What do you believe about it? When did you feel that feeling before?

BEHAVIOR



FEELINGS



BELIEFS



EXPERIENCES = ROOT



Key Points to remember

1. Our earlier experiences are the root of our current behavior
2. Earlier experiences can be from as recent as earlier today, last week, last month or years ago. It is important to avoid the trap of thinking that only our earliest experiences count. While it is true that we are more impressionable as young children, later experiences can and often do lead to negative beliefs as well.
3. Much like mowing off dandelions they just keep coming back. If we mow off our feelings/beliefs, they just keep coming back. If we want to get rid of the dandelion, we need to get to the root = earlier

Personal Story – John was bullied at the swimming pool in high school. He was stripped of his trunks in front of a group of people and laughed at. He believes that he is not safe and his body is shameful, leading him to feel anxious at the pool, beach etc. He is not comfortable being physically intimate with his wife later in life.

Let's Apply Behavior → Feelings → Experiences to John

Behavior ↓	↔	Avoids public places like pools and beaches. Has trouble being physically intimate with his wife. ↓
Feelings/Physical Sensation ↓	↔	Feels afraid and unsafe in public places. Feels a sense of shame about his body ↓
Beliefs ↓	↔	Believes he is not safe and something is wrong with his body. ↓
Experiences ↓	↔	Bullies at the swimming pool, stripped of his worn trunks and laughed at in front of people ↓

How Can Knowing Our Minds Associate Our Past Experiences with Our Current Experiences Help Us Get Freedom?

Question: Why do our past experiences effect our current experiences?

Association: A current experience reminds us of an earlier, similar experience.

We associate experiences from our past every day, all day long, even when we do not know it is happening. It is why we react to people and situations the way we do.

Examples:

- Listening to an oldies station and singing along to the music makes us remember good times when we first connected to that music. The more we sing and focus on the music, the more we remember about our earlier experiences.
- Being yelled at by a coach may remind us of an angry/abusive father. This association may prevent us from listening to the coach or any authority figure.

Let's apply this to John and Lisa.

- John feels anxious and nervous at the pool or beach because he associates that with being bullied
- Lisa associates the feelings/belief with "there is something wrong with me" when her boyfriends are unfaithful and her father's leaving.

Personal Story – Mark sought out freedom because he yelled at his wife and kids a lot. He found that after going to reconciliation he would do it again and again, sometimes on the ride home from church. Mark started to see that he got angry when he felt like he did not matter to his family because Mark grew up on a farm and he never felt valued unless he was working all the time.

Key Points to remember

1. Patterns of behavior are associated with earlier experiences (root)
2. Start asking myself what did I experience to make me feel/believe that way?
3. Allow myself to remember my earlier experiences by focusing on them

Question: “Do I want to be free from past negative experiences?”

If So, follow the smoke.



If you were driving along and saw this smoke and wanted to know where it was coming from, you would ‘follow the smoke’. The smoke would lead you to its source, a fire. The smoke would not take you anywhere but to the fire it was coming from. The same is true for us. As we seek freedom and healing our beliefs and feelings are our smoke. If you follow the smoke it will take you back to the source of your earlier experiences

Let’s apply smoke and fire to Mark.

Mark’s smoke is his belief that ‘I am not important, I don’t matter’ that are triggered when he comes home after farming 17 hours and his family isn’t there. He finds himself getting angry and feeling his lack of importance – “I don’t matter”. Even though the reason his family wasn’t there was because his father-in-law was taken to the hospital for a heart attack and he didn’t know because he couldn’t get phone reception. Once Mark connects to these beliefs/feelings/sensation and his ‘smoke’ start to drift back to his fires and he remembers having these beliefs/feelings throughout much of his life. Until he gets to his fires - and - remembers feeling this way growing up. In fact one thing Mark remembered was how much he wanted to play ball ‘like the town kids’ and he was told it was a waste of time and couldn’t play. It was around this time he started to believe his only value came from being a worker.

Let’s apply smoke and fire to Lisa.

Smoke – She feels shame because she lets her boyfriends use her and they are unfaithful to her. She believes something is wrong with her and she deserves being treated this way. Her fire is the feelings/beliefs associated with dad leaving and not coming back for her as a child.

Lisa received freedom when the Lord showed her that her father did not treat her that way because there was something wrong with her; there was something was wrong with him. It is not her fault; she did not cause it. The Lord has always been there for you.

Key Points to Remember:

1. Smoke = beliefs/feelings/physical sensations
2. Fire = Our earlier experiences
3. Smoke always, always, always takes you to the fire. Trust it. Allowing yourself to connect to your beliefs/feelings/physical sensations your mind will automatically associate with the fire. That is how our minds work.
4. Once you get to the fire or fires invite Jesus to bring truth to our beliefs.

Healing and Freedom

Our hope for sharing this information and these stories with you was to give you hope, to offer you a tool for to achieve freedom in Christ in your own journey. We offer these simple steps for you to use as a guide. If you are willing to go where the Lord leads you, you will find healing.

As preparation for your time of prayer we suggest you find a quiet place without distractions. You might consider having another person with you as a support. Keep your prayers simple. Remember that the smoke will ALWAYS take you to your fire (earlier experiences). Let the fire come to you. Remember, our minds associates naturally, it is how the mind works. The Lord will always bring you truth.

Common lies:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am all alone. • I don't matter. • I am stupid. • I should have known better. • It was my fault. • I am bad, dirty, shameful, sick, nasty and everyone can see it. • I do not know what to do and I cannot stop it • There is no way out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My life is ruined. • I am worthless. • I am a burden. • I could never jump high enough to please them • I am not acceptable • If I don't show my feelings I cannot get hurt. • There is something wrong with me. • I am not loved or loveable
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Lisa's Healing Session (abbreviated)

- Lisa came to us with a behavior of letting people take her for granted and taking advantage of her.
- She felt like 'something is wrong with me for people to treat me like this, not matter how good I am to them.'
 - We asked to 'feel' how that felt – no matter what she did, how good she was to people, they still treated her badly
 - Allowed her memory to go back to when she began to feel like that
- It started when her father promised to come back for her . . . and he NEVER did.
 - Began to feel it was her fault – there was something wrong with her – she was not important and so did not matter
- Prayer, "Lord, did my dad not come back for me because there was something wrong with me? Is it proof I do not matter?"
- Lord/Truth, "*There was never anything wrong with you. There was something wrong with your father. I was there with you. I felt your pain. I walked with you. I cried with you.*"

Self Ministry Steps

- 1) Identify the behavior I want to change
- 2) Identify feelings connected to the behavior (smoke)
- 3) Focus on the feelings and let your mind find the source (fire)
- 4) Once at the source/sources (fire) ask yourself what I believe in this memory that feels bad (lie).
- 5) Ask the Lord for his perspective and truth

Key Points

- Our feelings/beliefs are the smoke
- Our earlier experiences are the fire
- "Simple is better for prayers" = "Lord, is (the lie) true?"

Hesitations

Hesitation: the act of hesitating; a delay due to uncertainty of mind or fear

Sometimes we follow the smoke all the way back to the fire. We find our fire but we do receive freedom. Often that is because we ‘hesitate’ to truly let something go. Most of the time we have sincerely prayed and asked the Lord to take or remove a feeling that is driving our behavior, but nothing changes. A simple question such as, “What do you think will happen if you do forgive _____? Our hesitation is then revealed to us. It might be “ My anger towards them keeps me safe.” We take that to the Lord, “Lord, is it true that as long as _____ is angry with her father she is safe. He can never hurt her again.” The Lord then reveals His truth Susan’s heart. Her anger does not make her safe. It makes her hard and bitter. Hanging onto the anger hurts her – not him. Some common hesitations are:

- Types of hesitations for letting go of your anger:
 - They will get away with it = I am the judge.
 - What they did won’t matter.
 - I don’t matter.
 - I will get hurt again.
 - I have lived with it so long, what will it be like if I let it go

Take my hesitations to Jesus and let him reveal his truth.

- Types of hesitations for letting go of sadness/loss:
 - I will forget them.
 - They didn’t matter.
 - It’s all I have left of them.
 - What will replace the sadness/loss?

Take my hesitations to Jesus and let him reveal his truth.

- Types of hesitations that prevent us from letting go of shame:
 - I’m too dirty.
 - You will something is wrong with me or I am bad.
 - It is too bad for Jesus.

Take my hesitations to Jesus and let him reveal his truth.

Personal story – This is my own story of hesitating. I lost both of my parents within 6 months of each other. I was told grieving takes time. I expected pain, but after a length of time the pain was no better. The mention of mom or dad brought tears to my eyes and a deep sorrow engulfed me. When in prayer I attempted to give the pain to God, it would not leave. As Mike prayed with me, the question he asked was, “Why won’t you give that pain to God?” Without thinking, I said, “Because it is all I have left of them.” If that was true, that all I had left of my parents was this pain, why would I give away. I really did believe that. When we asked the Lord if was true, he showed me that all the pain I carried was a chain that weighed me down and kept me from remembering the good memories and all the love that was there. Once I let it go I was flooded with good memories and truths about my parents and the love between a parent and child that is still there for me to have and cherish.

How Do I Know if I Am Free?

Once you have worked through the steps, you may wonder if this worked. You may ask, “Am I healed?” The answer is:

1. When the fire doesn’t hurt anymore. When I don’t feel shame, anger, sadness or other negative emotion in there.
2. If I feel negative emotions ask, “What do I believe that makes me feel bad?”
3. Simply pray for the Lord’s perspective for those beliefs as well

Review – Wrap up

My 1) _____ shape my beliefs. My 2) _____ shape my feelings. My 3) _____ drive my behavior. My 4) _____ leads to sin. Having positive 5) _____ leads me to believe positive things about myself and the world around me. Having 6) _____ experiences leads me to believe negative things about myself and the world around me.

When I believe things about myself or the world around me that are not true, these beliefs are 7) _____.

If I want to find the source of the lies, I have to follow the smoke. The 8) _____ always leads to the 9) _____. My feelings and beliefs (lies) are the 10) _____. My earlier experiences are the 11) _____. To find the source of my lies I need to remember my 12) _____.

Lies are healed through Jesus’s 13) _____ so I need to take them to him for his perspective.

My beliefs/feelings will always take me to their source unless I hesitate. (Smoke and 14) _____).

If I take my hesitations to Jesus he will reveal his 15) _____.

Answers

1 -Experiences, 2- Beliefs, 3- Feelings, 4- Behavior, 5-Experiences, 6-Negative, 7-Lies, 8-Smoke, 9 – Fire, 10 – Smoke, 11 – Fire, 12- Earlier experiences, 13-Truth, 14- Fire, 15- Truth