

**Grace Bible Church**  
**Pastor Robert McLaughlin**  
**Tree Of Life**  
**Lesson review for week ending 3-14-21**

**I. Continuing our study of the defense mechanisms contrasted with spiritual self-esteem and spiritual autonomy from momentum and growth in the Christian way of life.**

**In these lessons Pastor will look at:**

- Defense Mechanism #18 (Sublimation) and 19 (Subjectivity)
- Establish how these DM's negatively impact and ultimately destroy the believer's capacity for growth, the attainment of spiritual maturity, and effectiveness as a witness in the angelic conflict.
- Identify and define spiritual skills that empower believer to overcome dependence on DM's
- Establish how spiritual mechanics of the PPOG overcome the need for reliance on them
- Show examples of turning apparent disadvantages in life into advantages

**1) Defense Mechanism #18 – Sublimation**

Sublimation is defined as the human viewpoint thinking of finding a new outlet, a new hobby, a new system of entertainment, etc., as a new drive or outlet for one's frustration. This is a counterfeit or substitution for PSD #6, personal sense of destiny (in God's plan), and #9, Plus H (+H) which is sharing the happiness of God. Because we do not operate under God's superior and perfect system we do not have a higher sense of direction and purpose to give our lives meaning and subordinate our activity to, nor do we have the inner happiness of +H that comes from fulfilling that purpose, so we must substitute, or sublimate, with some kind of cosmic or worldly distraction or escape, such as a hobby, romance, escapism of all kinds, social life, works programs, etc.

**2) Defense Mechanism #19 – Subjectivity**

Subjectivity is defined as self-pity, a function or manifestation of arrogant preoccupation with self. This means you are feeling the inverse of or negative side of pride. The prideful person, when things are going well, is boastful and cocky, taking credit for the state of circumstances, and feeling high above others. But when things are not going as desired, they are feeling sorry for themselves and seeking sympathy, singing "Woe is me! Nobody knows my sorrows!" Basically, they're either the best in the world, or the worst in the world, from moment to moment, exaggerating their own importance and the importance of their feelings, thoughts, and desires/needs. So subjectivity for the believer is when the person has allowed their FLOT line to be overrun by the outside pressure of adversity and is now under the influence of stress in the soul; emotions have taken command. They are seeking the inferior solution of comfort, instead of rebounding and recovering and getting back to their post! Because of their failure, while in this state, they have no capacity to solve their problem (they can't even see what it is) and they have no capacity for life or happiness. Subjectivity is like the opposite of +H, it is a place where there is -H, they can only try to drain the happiness of others around them. They are slaves to the details of life and to circumstances and outside forces.

This is all based on or dependent on one's relationship with God. Personal love for God and impersonal love for mankind are interlocking and interdependent problem solving devices which replace defense mechanisms and enable us to overcome the problems and adversity of life without succumbing to such a state. God's system gives the believer freedom from the slavery of the world system, by providing the tools and techniques and a new system of thinking and perceiving. It's not circumstances that wreck us, it's our *reaction* to them. Operating in the PPOG, under the power of God the Holy Spirit allows us to take back control of our happiness and fulfill our personal sense of destiny by fulfilling God's plan for our lives. If we do not love God, first and foremost, how can we really love others, especially when they are adversarial to us? Because God loves us, we desire to love others, and because we Love God, we are able to.

**1JO 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.**

Note the second half of verse 20, for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. Your attitude toward people whom you see indicates your attitude toward God whom you cannot see. Other people can see this, and this is one way that we act as ambassadors for Christ without always even realizing it. If you hate those who are visible, how can you say you love God who is invisible.

**1JO 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.**

Commandment is the noun entole, entole is an authoritative prescription; an order and command from headquarters, or a divine prescription.

And what is this command?

**1JO 4:21.....that the one who loves God should love his brother also.**

The one who loves God is a reference to the believer who lives in the divine plan designed for him in eternity past by God. This relationship with God is the basis of spiritual self-esteem, which is a self-esteem that is not dependent on outside props or personalities but rather on the immutable and perfect integrity of God, and therefore does not wax and wane resulting in the emotional roller coaster and bipolar extremes we see in those whose self-esteem is based on the cosmic system.

## **II. Evidence or manifestations of spiritual self-esteem**

**1) Tranquility of soul** – you begin to relax in your soul, and exhibit a relaxed mental attitude. You are not easily ruffled or offended, nor is your FLOT line easily overrun by pressure of adversity or challenges (2 Cor 13:11).

**2) Stability of Mental Attitude** – a consistent stability of contentment and confidence, you do not feel threatened by others and avoid inordinate competition, and do not have a need to be recognized or seek approbation or attention.

**3) Composure Marked By Self-Assurance** – the result of correct application of Bible doctrine to daily life. This is the picture of status quo function and residence inside the PPOG. This believer is like a combat veteran who is not afraid or anxious about unexpected disruptions or sudden changes in plan.

**4) Grace orientation to life** - treating others with the same grace you receive from the Lord. You operate in grace. You give others the benefit of the doubt, and when wronged, you do not form resentments or seek revenge or retaliation.

**5) Doctrinal Orientation to Reality** – you view your experience in the world and historical events through the lens of Bible doctrine and divine viewpoint, functioning under genuine humility, teachability, objectivity, and spiritual common sense.

**6) Good Decisions From a Position of Strength** – decisions are motivated by personal love for God and guided by divine viewpoint thinking. This is when circumstances will often begin to change for the believer, but whether prosperous or lacking, the believer does not revert to emotionalism and self-pity.

**7) Personal Control of Your Life** – doctrinal thinking and divine viewpoint result in doctrinal conceptualization. Thinking and conceptualization of thought is based on doctrine dominating the stream of consciousness.

**8) Personal Sense of Destiny** – believer has an abiding awareness of one's place in God's plan, and is grounded in this awareness. Problems are solved by application of doctrine and based on God's purpose, not one's own personal or selfish interests.

**9) Self-Confidence From Wisdom** – consistent application of doctrine and the 10 PSD's to life's problems results in unshakable confidence in the Word, and therefore secondarily in the self-image and secure future.

**10) Poise** – the believer is operating under complete spiritual self-control.

### **III. Self-Pity**

Subjectivity in the most literal sense means seeing things from a self-centered point of view, in terms of how they affect you, which leads to double-standards. Self-pity is inevitable for a person operating under this point of view when things aren't going the way they demand and expect – their way! Self-pity is the negative manifestation of good old pride and arrogance, as stated above. Me, me, me thinking. A believer who fails to execute the PPOG and grow spiritually through consistent PMA of Bible doctrine can not develop spiritual self-esteem and will remain in an infantile state, being dependent on defense mechanisms, human and/or material props, and cosmic solutions. Making bad decisions from a position of weakness creates limited options and negative circumstances which lead inevitably to jealousy and self-pity. Self-pity is a terrible vice and it is vital to understand its destructive power in your life should you follow the above path. A person living in self-pity CAN NOT solve their problems in life and will constantly seek escapes and distractions. Nothing can help such a person and any offers of sound advice will be rejected outright or rationalized away. There is no hope! Self-pity says nothing is your own fault, and you are an innocent victim. If nothing is your fault, then solving problems is not your responsibility, it is the job of someone or everyone else to solve them for you. What a sorry state! With the right attitude however, and more so with divine viewpoint and doctrine circulating in the stream of consciousness, disadvantage can be turned to advantage and opportunity.

#### **IV. Tom Sullivan – a stark contrast to the dependence and helplessness of self-pity**

Let's take a look at a man born with a serious handicap and who many people would say (and surely did) that he was a victim, and couldn't have the same opportunity or chances of success in life because of it. But before I tell you the handicap, let's look at some of his many achievements. He is an author, a musician, a singer, an actor, having appeared on the show M\*A\*S\*H\* and the film "Airport 77." He is a world-class athlete, holding two championships for wrestling and even earned a spot on the 1958 Olympic wrestling team. He has a Harvard degree in Clinical Psychology. He is a skydiver. He is a motivational speaker. His autobiography "If You Could See What I Hear" was made into a movie. He is also blind.

There is a story from his book where he was able to make his eyes bulge and he used this in wrestling when in a choke hold to make his opponent think he was in distress so that they would let up, and Sullivan would pin them. This is turning disadvantage into advantage in a very overt and immediate way!

Tom Sullivan refused to feel sorry for himself and let his life and potential be governed by his disadvantage or seek the dependence of pity and handouts. He did not let circumstances enslave him. He did not react, he responded, and he responded courage. It's not the circumstances, it's how we react or respond to them. Whatever advantages or disadvantages we may be born into or get ourselves into by way of bad choices, for believers in the PPOG, there is equal opportunity. God in His perfect wisdom and unfailing love has given to us a perfect system for imperfect people, and those who avail themselves of it will shine His light and live lives of honor and distinction as winner believers and live the +H life.

God can take any type of evil situation and convert it into divine good as Joseph did when he said to his brothers who had betrayed him in **Gen 50:20, and as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.** Or in **Deu 23:5 the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you.**

#### **V. Elijah – the picture of a once-great believer paralyzed by self-pity**

Elijah was not indwelt by the Spirit as we are, however, in **2Ki 2:9** the Spirit was upon him. Now, in **1Ki 19:1**, we begin with the fact that Elijah has just led a great revival in Israel and someone has become very angry that this revival has taken place. 450 prophets were slain and someone is very angry. She's a woman whose name most of you are familiar with, a woman called Jezebel. She was the wife of King Ahab and was a pagan (here is a great example of why a believer can not marry an unbeliever) and turned him into an idolater along with the rest of the nation. After her prophets were slain by Elijah, she retaliated and had 400 prophets of God killed (**1Ki 18:4,13**). She was a powerful woman in the human world, and clearly controlled the King, but should have no sway over a great believer like Elijah, or any believer with any doctrine. Yet all she had to do was send a messenger with a threat to him and he went soft and ran away possessed by fear (**1 Ki. 19:2**).

Why? Elijah became proud and arrogant and thought he was more important than he was, and so when circumstances turned ugly for him he did what all self-absorbed people do – he emoted and fell into self-doubt, self-pity, and fear. It's amazing how fast overconfidence can become mortal fear! He ran far

away and hid out in a cave! He had just had a great spiritual victory, but always remember that a believer is most vulnerable at just that time, because the victory can go to our head. The fear of retaliation by the priestess overran Elijah's FLOT line and became stress in the soul. He was ruled by fear and became totally irrational and self-absorbed. He was so afraid he left his servant in **1 Ki 19:3**. Another thing that should be noted is that the more someone is focused on self, the less they focus on others or how their actions affect those around them. Self-absorbed people tend to be hypersensitive toward self but proportionately insensitive and indifferent toward others. They don't even notice let alone appreciate the faithfulness of the people around them, in this case his servant, who ran 150 miles with him! Elijah couldn't see it.

Elijah ran into the wilderness and hid, and was despondent. But the Lord Jesus Christ in a theophany ("the angel of the Lord") came and provided food for him to times in 1 Ki 19:5-7, so we see that even when we are "off the reservation" and failing miserably, acting like babies, and rejecting God's plan – even when we are unfaithful, He is always faithful! Here we see a picture of logistical grace support and that it is extended to us whether we are winners or losers.

**In 1KI 19:9 Then he came there to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"**

Lodged is the Qal imperfect of 'lun,' which means to intend to stay for a short time, but to end up staying for a much longer time. The reason here is he has no spiritual self-esteem, and instead is living in self-pity. "Woe is me! Nobody knows my sorrows!!" If he had lived today he might have said "I hate my life!" How often do we hear someone say this?

Elijah reveals his arrogance when the Lord again visits him in the second half of verse 9, asking him "what are you doing here?" to which Elijah declares

**"I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Ki 19:10)**

This is not true at all, God is not dependent on us, we are dependent on Him!! God has 7,000 others who have not bent the knee to Baal according to **ROM 11:4**.

Elijah then adds **"for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword."**

Now he's trying to shift attention off himself and blame others. Have you ever been in this state? I'm sure we all are at one time or another at least, probably many times. God then shows Elijah the difference between natural power and divine power, but Elijah still can't move on from the pity party. Finally God commands him to return to Damascus and anoint two kings to help him since he can't do it himself. This is what happens when we fail to operate in God's PPOG and get our eyes on self instead of staying focused on Him – we fail. God remains always faithful, but we fall short of the potential that we have if we do things His way.

Job is another great example. In Job 19 we have a soliloquy of self-pity. In **JOB 19:21**, he cries out **"Pity me, pity me, O you my friends, For the hand of God has struck me."** Like I said earlier, "Woe is me! No one knows my sorrow!!" A believer who remains in this state and does not recover has

no capacity for life, love and happiness and so they sublimate by becoming a slave to some detail or details of life, thereby ending up a loser.

Isaiah questioned the calling of God and cried out to the Lord about him being chosen or elected and he said in **Isa 6:5** **“Woe is me, for I am ruined”** as he was feeling sorry for himself.

Here's another question, ***Have you ever considered the impact your disadvantage would have on the world around you if you only took advantage of your disadvantage?***

If you could ever get out of the disadvantage mind-set long enough to view how that God can use that in the life of thousands who have their own disadvantages....it would blow your mind. It's amazing!

The Lord can use your disadvantage, be it physical, emotional, mental, financial, or anything else, to positively impact the lives of others. The only thing that stands in the way is our attitude. The real danger belongs to the person who is consumed by what they have and it is difficult for them to prosper because they are always depending on what they have.

As **REV 3:17** says **“Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,**

**The question is “Are you willing to repent or change today?”**

As long as you're alive, as Carol King would say, it's never too late! Your life can have an impact that you will never really see the fulfillment of *until* you get to heaven.

Then in heaven you will be a part of **COL 1:28** where the apostle Paul says **And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.**

Don't let the injustices of life, the unfairness or the disadvantages get the best of you....you get the best of them by making something out of your life with God. Perhaps God allowed them to prepare you for a great purpose, just like Joseph! Operate in that kind of mindset and you will go far.

## **VI. Jealousy.**

Satan loves to get believers occupied with self instead of Christ. Unfortunately that often doesn't give him much trouble, because we have a tendency to do that on our own! A believer who is immature spiritually and lacks doctrine in the soul will not be able to withstand great adversity and testing and will always focus on self, reacting emotionally instead of responding doctrinally. This leads to frustration and self-pity, jealousy, bitterness, implacability, anger, hatred, malice, vituperation, etc. Mental attitude sins. Jealousy is one of the most toxic sins and one that will destroy any capacity for happiness and any spiritual momentum, not to mention relationships faster than anything else.

There are always those who are jealous and want more than what they have and are never satisfied with what they possess. Jealousy is discontentment with the blessings, successes, or status symbols of other people. Jealousy is also total selfishness and is incapable of true love. Jealousy is a possessiveness which suppresses the volition of another person, in other words, the object of your jealousy you seek to control and run their lives and in that way jealousy becomes tyranny. Jealousy stems from arrogance and insecurity, fear. Fear of losing another's affection or love. Fear of rivalry. Fear of unfaithfulness.

You see, when it comes to jealousy, the only love that is worthwhile is when someone gives it to you freely. But the insecure person is always possessive, a tyrant.

PRO 14:30 A tranquil heart is life to the body, But jealousy is rottenness to the bones.

As goes your mental attitude, so goes your health. This is a spiral of self-induced misery which ends in self-destruction.

**Job 5:2 For irritation kills the fool, and jealousy brings death to the simple.**

Did you know that the sin of jealousy in Israel was so great that a special offering was made for it?**(Num 5:11-31)**

Jealousy is the basis for the destruction of category two love (personal love of a member of the opposite sex), **(SOS 8:6-7)**.

**In SOL 8:6, the Shulamite woman is speaking and she says, "Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death,**

The seal signifies she belongs to a certain man and she is waiting for a certain man. The phrase "**strong as death**" indicates that the man's love for the woman and her response to that love serves as a fortification and protection for the woman's soul and body. Each protects the other. Each satisfies the other. Each fulfills the other. However, notice next, it says that **SOL 8:6 "Jealousy is as severe as Sheol [or the grave];** Just as the grave robs you from a loved one so jealousy robs you of capacity in relationship with your loved one.

When it says in **SOL 8:6 Its flashes are flashes of fire, The {very} flame of the Lord,** it's not a reference to jealousy but to category two love. Flashes represent her responses to her right man are hot. She is turned on first in her soul which carries over to her physical response, and these flashes she says are .... "**the very flame of the Lord.**" Please note that the flame is from the Lord not the flesh.

Now, notice how strong jealousy is because in **SOL 8:7 "Many waters cannot quench love [however, verse 6 tells us jealousy can], Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised."**

Water ordinarily puts out fire. Many waters simply refers to pressures, disasters, difficulties, etc.

**SOL 8:7 "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it;**

Rivers refer to the most horrible disasters of life which cannot destroy it. And there's one more phrase here, this love cannot be bought.

**SOL 8:7.....If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised."**

By the way, Keil and Delitzsch bring out that this statement was a direct putdown to Solomon's many gifts and his riches to this woman. Solomon could not conquer this woman because she was protected by the love for her man. The point here is that jealousy can even destroy love between a right man and right woman, it is powerful enough to do that, and therefore very dangerous!

## **VII. Defense Mechanism #20 – Undoing aka Make Amends**

This leads us to the twentieth defense mechanism which is known as the Undoing “Defense Mechanism” in which the person engages in behavior designed to symbolically make amends for negative thoughts and feelings or actions. This is the "I'll make it up to you" game. God does not want you to make it up.....He wants to you to rebound and recover, and keep moving forward in the plan!

- All of the “Defense Mechanisms” are powerless when they compare to God’s solutions.
- God’s solutions are based upon not quitting and becoming a man after God’s own heart.

### **1. David**

To illustrate this we will take a look at some of the failures and victories of King David to show what kind of people God can use and how God can take a man who has made as many mistakes as David and make him one of the greatest believers of all time, a man whom God would say was a man after His own heart.

David failed many times as a believer and used the “Defense mechanisms” to his advantage but eventually he was dealt with by the Lord for it. David received severe discipline at times, far beyond what most of us will receive. But to whom much is given, much is expected (**Luk 12:48**)

In **1Sa 21:10**, David willfully sinned and told a lie the result of his lie was that an entire city was wiped out (city of Nob). David could have gotten very guilty and quit, but a quitter is not a man after God’s own heart.

You may tell a lie and some people got hurt but David told a lie and an entire city was destroyed. The average believer would have never been able to handle this. The average believer would run around for the rest of his life with a guilt complex, but not David - he knew grace and David got right up. He forgot about it and moved right on! God’s grace, God’s love was more real to him than his guilt so instead he simply confessed his sin and kept moving. David knew and believed **PRO 24:16 For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.**

Another time, David faked madness and made the king, King Achish of the Phillistines believe that he was crazy and as a result the king said not to touch a crazy man, and as a result thousands died because David lied (**1 SA 21:10-15**).

Did David get guilty, weep and wail and fall apart? He did not! He got up and moved on.

Then David failed in responsibility in **2Sa 11:1**; he should have led his troops in battle but he stayed home in Jerusalem and as a result there was disaster on the battlefield but there was also disaster on the home front on Jerusalem itself.

Did David sit around and cry about it the rest of his life? No, again he simply got up and moved on.

Then while he was in Jerusalem, (**2Sa 11:2-27**) - he ends up in certain "shocking" sins. He seduced his

best officer's wife, and then to cover it up, got him drunk and tried to get him to sleep with her, but his officer wouldn't leave the battlefield. In the end, David had the man killed and took the woman as a wife. How do you like that?

Now, at this point, most believers would have stopped and quit, but not a believer after God's own heart.

This is what made David a man after God's own heart, David knew the doctrine and applied the doctrine rather than the Defense Mechanisms. When guilt came in, he believed the doctrine of divine viewpoint rather than relying on the Defense Mechanisms. When he screwed up (even royally!) he applied doctrine, rebounded, recovered, and moved forward rather than hiding in Defense Mechanisms. Get the point?

Defense Mechanisms cannot and will not be able to solve your problems. Even if they did, they didn't solve YOU, so you will only keep making more of them and getting buried alive in them and in mental attitude sins. The spiritual life that God has provided just for you has all the solutions to every single problem you will ever face, solutions that are not only designed to solve your problems but to make you a better person as well. When you are involved in the plan of God and the living spiritual life that God has provided, you will have all kinds of afflictions and difficulties to deal with. If it's just you, you'll have to deal with these things personally. If your marriage is based on doctrine, you'll have to deal with these things in your marriage. If your family is involved in doctrine, you'll have to deal with these things as a family. If your church is teaching doctrine, you'll have to deal with these things as a church.

The fact of the matter is, if you use the problem solving devices instead of "Defense Mechanisms," you will prosper and be a better person for it. It is like the children of Israel in **EXO 1:12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel.** This is one of the great battles fought in the soul of the believer. A major soul conflict exists in the life of every believer between defense mechanisms and metabolized doctrine at any stage of growth.

Next time we will begin with Defense Mechanism # 21, Reaction Formation.

