

PNEUMANETICS

ORIGINAL

BOOK 14

FATHERHUNGER / MOTHERHUNGER

(AWOL PARENTS)

BY
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Pneumanetics

Pneumanetics Original

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WORKBOOK

DAY ONE

PERSONAL THOUGHTS ASSESSMENT

The primary purpose of this Workbook is to help you apply all of the principles and truths it presents, so that you can live the full life that Christ intended for you (John 10:10). Its second aim is to provide Biblical counselors with all of the information they will need to be able to fully understand and address the issues they discover during counseling sessions.

If questions are the lifeblood of the counselor, then asking the right questions are at the heart of successful outcomes. Counselors should ask questions that elicit the most accurate information, information that hopefully they may verify during the session. This Workbook session is designed specifically to identify those who are dealing with *MotherHunger* and *FatherHunger*.

1. If you're married, how far apart are you and your spouse in age
 - 1-5 years
 - 5-10 years
 - 10-15 years

2. Mark whether your parents are together or divorced.
 - Still married
 - Divorced

3. If your parents are divorced, how old were you when their divorce took place?

4. Who would you say was the major player in your life during your childhood?
 - Father
 - Mother
 - Other (please specify):

5. Where do you fall in birth order with your siblings?

Oldest

Middle

Youngest

Only child

6. Where does your spouse fall in birth order with their siblings?

Oldest

Middle

Youngest

Only child

7. Which child was the favorite in your family? Explain why you chose this person. (If you can, please cite specific examples or events that prove your position.)

8. Which child would your spouse say was the favorite in their family? Explain why you think they would choose this person. (If you can, please cite specific examples or events that prove their position.)

9. Which of the following characteristics would you say describe your father?
(Check all that apply.)

Aggressive	Indifferent
Angry	Passive
Abusive	Stoic
Domineering	Withdrawn

10. Which of the following characteristics would you say describe your mother?
(Check all that apply.)

Caring	Hyperactive
Controlling	Involved
Critical	Loving
Domineering	Peacemaker

11. Which parent would you say most influenced you growing up?

Father
Mother

Explain why you chose that parent:

12. Which parent would your spouse say most influenced them growing up?

Father
Mother

Explain why you think your spouse would choose that parent:

13. Write out who your father was to you as a person when you were growing up:

14. Write out who your father was to you as a father when you were growing up:

15. Write out who your mother was to you as a person when you were growing up:

18. Write out ten things that your father was to you growing up:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

19. Write out ten things that your mother was to you growing up:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

20. Write out ten things that you feel a “real” mother should be:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

21. List five things that you wish your father had been to you when you were growing up:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

22. List five things that you wish your mother had been to you when you were growing up:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

23. When you reflect on your father and mother during your childhood, what emotions do you feel? (Check all that apply.)

Anger

Happiness

Anxiety

Sadness

24. Describe the emotional reaction(s) you feel when you hear or see the word "father":

25. Would you say that you are more attracted to people older than you than you are to people your own age? If yes, please explain.

26. Write out what you would like to be to your children.

[illegible]

UNDERSTANDING RESULTS: PERSONAL THOUGHTS ASSESSMENT

1. Age difference below five years is generally considered “normal.” However, age difference above five years is a strong indicator that one (or both) partners felt the absence of a father and/or mother.

1 - 5 Years Within the range of “Normal.”

5 - 10 Years **Husband older than wife.** Could potentially indicate she is seeking to have the missing Daddy role fulfilled in her life.

Wife older than husband. Could potentially indicate he is seeking to have the missing Mommy role fulfilled in his life.

10 - 15 Years An age difference of 10 years or greater absolutely indicates one (or both) partners is/are dealing with issues consistent with an absent parent.

Younger partner. The counselor should investigate and deal with the source of this absence with the younger spouse.

Older partner. The counselor should look for unhealthy behavioral patterns that indicate the older partner has assumed an inappropriate parent-to-child role with their spouse.

Both partners. The counselor’s ultimate goal should be to guide partners toward the only appropriate role for each: husband and wife.

2. Regardless of its stated cause (abuse, infidelity, “growing apart,” etc.), a divorce indicates that one parent was the active player in the home, or possibly even that both were passive/absent.
3. The younger the child was when the divorce happened, the greater will be their prevalence toward an absent mother or father.
4. Establishing the major player in the home reveals which parent was the primary role model for the counselee growing up.

Wife. If the wife’s role model was her father, rather than her mother, then that bears some investigation; however, this does not necessarily indicate relationship damage.

Husband. Unfortunately, for the husband, crossing role models is much more complicated. If his mother was his role model, it’s very likely he will have tendencies toward being “a mama’s boy.” This may manifest in any number of ways: he may enjoy activities that society deems gender-inappropriate; he may behave like a “man’s man,” yet still struggle with doubts about his masculinity; he may behave effeminately; etc.

- 5-8. The birth/pecking order of siblings is another important factor in the counseling process. Because the responsibility of parenting requires learning from mistakes, parents work out most of their parenting styles on the oldest child. For this reason, the oldest sibling is generally less sensitive to criticism, discipline, and rebuke. Predictably, the youngest child is typically just the opposite. The youngest tends to take umbrage at even perceived slights, putdowns, criticism, etc. With very few exceptions, almost no counselees identify themselves as the favorite child.

While certainly these are not rules set in stone, across years and years of counseling, I have observed the following:

- a. Oldest tends to marry oldest
- b. Middle tends to marry middle (or youngest).
- c. Youngest tends to marry youngest (or an only child).
- d. Only children tend to marry other only children (or the youngest).
- e. When oldest marries youngest, the two almost instantly square off in an adversarial relationship.

9-10. These questions are designed to establish the emotional roles played by each parent. The counselee's answers often offer "shortcuts" to identifying likely challenges they face:

- a. A domineering mother and passive father is often a major player in anorexia and bulimia.
- b. For girls, a controlling, domineering mother often produces MotherHunger.
- c. For the female child, an indifferent, passive, or withdrawn father can set the stage for a promiscuous child. Many young girls, upon reaching puberty, begin seeking in many men what was denied them by the one.
- d. For the male child, an indifferent, passive, or withdrawn father can set the stage for him feeling attracted to older men and/or produce confusion about his own orientation. What children have are emotional needs, not sexual orientation.

11-26. These questions demonstrate very vividly for the counselee the direct correlation between their mindset about their parents and how they perceive God.

DAY TWO

RENEWING YOUR MIND

Before you can begin to renew your mind, you first need to understand your existing belief system. Everything about a person's behavior: how they act, talk, think, their relationships with others, and their self-talk—all indicate what that person believes about themselves, about others, and about God. Throughout childhood, we unconsciously formulate our belief systems, basing them upon (a) our observations of the attitudes and actions of our parents (and other significant figures), (b) our own life experiences, and (c) significant events that take place in our lives. (For much more information on this topic, refer to *Pneumanetics Original* Book 11: *Belief Systems*, available for purchase at www.histruthtransforms.org.)

In Romans 12:2, God instructs us through the Apostle Paul that we are to renew our minds. The way that we think—how we are “wired”—determines how we live. If we want to live differently, we have to have our wiring changed; this means going through the process of allowing the Holy Spirit to renew our minds. While the Holy Spirit does its work, it also takes time and action on our part.

*“...do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Romans 12:2 (emphasis added)

God changing our beliefs requires both Renewing the Mind and Putting On/Putting Off. The Holy Spirit living within us is what makes these things possible: He reveals to us specifically which things need to be renewed, then empowers us to effect change. With the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and our will, we can renew our minds.

PUTTING OFF

Based upon all that you have been learning about yourself, write out any thoughts or behaviors that you now recognize as incorrect.

Going through each item on your list, confess it to God, and then reject it: "Father, I have not been thinking about _____ according to Your truth. I reject how I thought about _____ in the name of Jesus."

We are to "die" to self. Confess to God any incorrect behavior. Make a conscience choice to repent from this behavior and ask the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out so your behavior will change to being more Godly.

PUTTING ON

For each of the incorrect thoughts and behaviors you identify, write a Scripture that expresses God's truth about it.

Profess God's truth over each item. Tell God that you are choosing to believe His truth, and ask Him to renew your mind with it. Explain how this area will look different going forward in your life.

Consider yourself new in Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to make these thoughts and behaviors permanent in your life.

BECOMING A PARENT-HERO

Parents can become heroes to their children through the process of putting off and putting on. In this section, we will present five positive roles that parents can fulfill, with practical examples for how they can learn to live in each category. If parents will consistently apply what they learn here, they can even pass these traits on to their children, who will in turn pass them on to their children. The following are roles for parent-heroes:

1. Parent-Heroes Are: Ones Who Love
2. Parent-Heroes Are: Ones Who Provide
3. Parent-Heroes Are: Protectors
4. Parent-Heroes Are: Comforters
5. Parent-Heroes Are: Encouragers

1. PARENT-HEROES ARE: ONES WHO LOVE

In the animal kingdom, the male parent sometimes kills and devours his own offspring. But if he does, he faces the awesome rage of the mother. In the high country in Colorado, where I lived for many years, all children learn early on never to come between a bear cub and its mother. The protective care a mother displays for her children can be awesome to behold. A mother is a hero whose love drives her to protect her children at all costs.

Fathers could take a page out of the mothers' handbook on child rearing. One thing that mothers seem to understand almost intuitively, most fathers still need to learn:

Love is less an emotion than an activity.

No one would argue that a father needs to love his children. But how a father expresses that love is every bit as important. And the best way he can do this is with his active presence. In fact, there's simply no substitute for it. Be present with your children, and be involved and engaged in what's happening in their lives. Learn how to enjoy each of your children, whether they're six months old or sixteen years old.

Both mom and dad need to be involved in every aspect of the child's life: feeding them, changing diapers, giving baths, telling stories, praying with them at bedtime. If you feel you're too busy for your children, then you are too busy—period. Mothers are usually involved in all of these activities. If a mother isn't engaged in these things, then she's neglecting her children, a strong indicator that something is wrong. And whether a mother “needs” help or not, it is every father's responsibility to actively join in caring for his children's needs.

I cannot tell you how many times over the years I have counseled women who as little girls deeply longed to be held and hugged and told, “I love you,” by their fathers! That is the heart's desire of every young child. One young woman, a devoted missionary, once told me that she traded her body just to be held for fifteen minutes—all because she had been deprived of that vitally necessary experience.

Every little heart is born with a need and a capacity for love and affection that is bigger than the whole outdoors. To be cuddled and rocked and held and squeezed and kissed and cherished is God's recipe for healthy children. What joy it is to a child to have Daddy and Mommy tell bedtime stories and tuck them in for the night. What great security and comfort!

Are daddies and mommies important? You bet! God never expected we could get along without them. For example, a little girl develops her femininity in contrast to the intimacy and closeness of the man in her life. Without this divinely instituted process, young girls grow up doubting their own identity and self-esteem.

Femininity should not be confused with sexual allure, although girls whose father is absent often fall into this trap. Femininity flows from within, out of an assurance of who she is, because her daddy loved and cared for her deeply. How much an adult woman values herself is directly correlated to how much her father cherished her as a little girl.

Boys develop their masculinity in contrast to the mother's femininity. However, in both cases, the impact of the father or the mother is tempered and balanced by the other. Parents must express their love not through gifts or other counterfeit substitutes, but through appropriate personal touch, interaction, and genuine interest. Not only can love cover a multitude of sins, it can also heal innumerable hurts, both small and large. When parents show authentic love to their children, it's like a constant flow of Band-Aids and little kisses, perpetually making everything all better.

To show His love to us, our Father created a new word to express it, the Greek *agape*. *Agape* is much more about active doing than it is about simply feeling. And when we mix that kind of God-love with our human emotional love, it creates a powerful force. This God-kind of love is absolutely unconditional, with the only restriction that we must receive it by faith.

To demonstrate this unique kind of love, we're going to do a simple but meaningful exercise. We'll take the so-called "Love Chapter," 1 Corinthians 13, and in every

instance where it uses the word “love,” we’ll replace that with the word “God.” (We’ll use the New American Standard Bible (NASB) version.) Let’s begin with verse four:

“_____ is patient, _____ is kind and is not jealous; _____ does not brag and is not arrogant, _____ does not act unbecomingly; _____ does not seek [his] own, _____ is not provoked, _____ does not take into a wrong suffered, _____ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but _____ rejoices with the truth; _____ bears all things, _____ believes all things, _____ hopes all things, _____ endures all things. _____ never fails.”
 1 Corinthians 13:4–8

Now let’s take it a step further. If you want to see what the Holy Spirit is transforming you into, do it again—but this time, insert your name in the place of “love.” This exercise shows you how the Holy Spirit intends to express Himself and His holiness in you, through you, and by you.

Particularly in our culture, fathers often attempt to substitute material gifts in the place of a loving and close relationship. But even if his family appreciates these gifts, they will never truly satisfy his children’s deep needs.

Some fathers, perhaps aware that they are “unable” to give their children quantity time, try to make up for it with quality time. I can tell you from personal experience that this does not work. (As a dad who had to travel a lot for work, I tried it.) The truth is, any time that you give your children should be quality time.

2. PARENT-HEROES ARE: ONES WHO PROVIDE

Both parents have roles in providing: A father is to be a provider. A mother meets needs. At one time in our culture, it was simply expected of men that they would provide for their families. The father was to be the primary breadwinner, and the mother would stay at home, taking care of the house and children—not to mention a million and one other things.

This societal norm is no longer the case today. Many men cop out of providing financially for their families. If a father has no concern for the emotional well-being of his family, certainly he will have no concern for their physical well-being, either.

Our culture has radically changed, so that not only is the father taken out of the home, but the mother is as well. Trying to make ends meet, both parents must work—largely to maintain the lifestyle level they have chosen.

That a father is to provide for his children is so obvious that it always amazes me when I meet men who make little or no effort to do so. God has no patience with deadbeat dads! God's Word makes His position on this issue crystal clear:

“...if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

1 Timothy 5:8

Fathers are supposed to provide to the best of their ability. And not just in material things, but in the necessities of the human heart.

Our Father is the consummate provider! The Biblical process is that God gives and we receive. However, can we truly believe that God is really interested in providing clothing, food, and shelter? Well, let's read what Jesus said:

“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Matthew 6:25–26; 33 (emphasis added)

Certainly material things are necessary, and God clearly recognizes this fact. But God doesn't stop there. Life consists of more than simply the material (Luke 12:15). The greatest security a child can experience comes from a close, caring relationship with their parents who love one another. A father is to provide—and to prove it by involving himself in his children's activities. That means attending school functions and athletic events. As fathers, we must choose to make our children's functions a

top priority. Our presence demonstrates our approval and care, and most of all, how proud we are of them.

There are many things that only a father can provide. As we have already seen, who could better be our example than our Heavenly Father: our encourager, our mentor, our comforter, our teacher? These are things that God offers and gives to each of us so that we can then pass them on to our children. Unfortunately, when a father is absent, it shortchanges children in many ways.

For a child to develop normal and necessary emotional feelings and expressions, they must see these in action through the God-appointed role models of their parents. If we deprive them of these normal expressions of love, they will grow up warped emotionally and spiritually.

When I had to travel for Campus Crusade for Christ, I could hardly wait to get back home. My thoughts never wandered far from my children I had left behind. Did you know that God sees us that same way? It's true. We are never far from His thoughts:

“How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.”

Psalms 139:17–18

And what's more, your Heavenly Father absolutely delights in caring for your needs and soothing your soul:

“For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.”

Zephaniah 3:17, New Living Translation

3. PARENT-HEROES ARE: PROTECTORS

Mothers excel at this, and most fathers are not far behind! The American dream has degenerated into a society fraught with danger. We live in a nation that has become pagan, with all kinds of perversions now lived out in the open. Consider the emotional and spiritual damage done to a child who is raised in a same-sex environment. To them, the abnormal becomes the norm. Our children are at risk! Where is the Church? Where are those who are willing to hold high the banner of Christ?

I never thought I would live to see the day when same-sex marriage would become the fad of the day, or that a homosexual, hedonistic lifestyle might be considered perfectly normal and reasonable. A tremendous battle is being fought today for the minds of our children—and we Christians are losing! Our children need our protection more now than at any time in this nation's history.

As much as we care for our children, certainly God cares for them more. Just read what Jesus said about children:

“And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Matthew 18:5–6

4. PARENT-HEROES ARE: COMFORTERS

Paul calls God “the God of all comfort.” In fact, he uses that word— “comfort”—ten times in 2 Corinthians 1:3–7. The root meaning of comfort includes the Latin word *fortis*, which means “strong” and “brave”! Barclay wrote, “Christian comfort is the comfort which brings courage and enables a man to cope with all that life can do to him.” This concept—courage to help us cope—is a little different spin than we usually put on comfort.

And yet, God's comfort is very real, coming to us on a vertical line directly from heaven. As our Father, He comforts us through all of our trials and tribulations. And more than that, God's comfort gives us the courage to face and overcome whatever

challenges come our way. This is where that idea came from for the line in the classic hymn, “Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.”

While God’s comfort is both real and necessary, so is a parent’s comfort. Fathers can bring a personal touch to their comfort, whether it’s sitting a six-year-old on his lap to make him feel secure, or putting a Band-Aid on a scraped knee. Such tiny comforts cover a whole world of hurt. And everyone—whether child or adult—needs someone to encourage them, to listen, to sympathize, and just to be there.

Fathers should specialize in this kind of activity. Yet often today, it is the mother who is the comforter of comforters. Mothers listen, mothers hold, mothers sympathize. They cry with us and hug us. A daddy’s comfort is a manly thing and necessary, but a mother’s love is all-encompassing. Even when I was too old to cry but young enough to still hurt, mom was there, encouraging, challenging, and helping.

Most people, when they think of comfort, don’t immediately also think “courage” as Barclay defined it. After all, what does bravery have to do with comfort? It might surprise you to learn that biblically, the answer to that question is “everything.” In fact, it is in understanding this that we will begin to realize the full import of what the word comfort actually means.

If you have been following Christ for any length of time, then by now you have no doubt discovered that the Christian walk is filled with landmines and pitfalls. New believers often seem surprised by this reality; many thought surrendering their lives to the Lord would guarantee them a life free from pain and difficulty! On the contrary, becoming a Christian means embracing persecution and the other challenges that come with it. Paul wrote this to the Philippians:

“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings...”

Philippians 3:10

And the apostle Peter wrote a similar warning:

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing...”

1 Peter 4:12–13

Even Jesus had something to say about life's difficulties, concluding his discourse with His disciples with these words:

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33 (emphasis added)

No matter how you look at it, the Christian life can be tough at times. We should absolutely expect it. But there is great value in our adversity. After all, a person who has never been through hard times is little help when it comes to offering comfort. What Jesus was saying in John 16 was essentially, “Look, guys... I’ve been there. I know it’s hard. It’s true that you’re going to face challenges. But don’t let that back you down. I’ve done it, and I survived!” Because Jesus has been through the fires—more than any of us ever will—He can comfort and encourage us. What’s more, he can give us the courage to endure and to overcome.

“For we do not have a high priest [Jesus] who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

Hebrews 4:15

So yes, our walk with Christ is definitely going to be filled with trials, tribulations, testings, afflictions, disappointments—and more. And those of us who have walked through the fields of affliction and made it successfully through to the other side have an obligation: we need to continually offer this unique brand of courage to others currently facing deep waters. We need to cheer them on, to encourage them to persevere.

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”

Galatians 6:9

As parents, we have unique opportunities to serve as exactly this kind of hero in the eyes of our children. God gifted us with them so that we could use our position of authority and influence to point them toward Him. And every time you gather your child up in your arms and love on them, every time you soothe them with words of comfort and encouragement, you’re representing God the Father to them.

Countless books have been written to try to tell us who God is: what He does, His names, His attributes, how great He is, and on and on. I hope that I have opened at least a small window here on who God is, to help you begin to see at least a picture of God as your Father—as your Daddy, your “Abba” (Romans 8:15). What I want you to begin to see is what a father should be. When you pair that together with the empowering of the Holy Spirit, you can begin to become transformed into all that you can be as a parent.

5. PARENT-HEROES ARE: ENCOURAGERS

My main problem as a child was that I simply did not want to grow up. I felt safe as a child, and the prospect of becoming a grownup offered no such comfort. I was also a middle child, and middle children tend to be lost in the family. My older brother was a star athlete, and my younger brother a certified genius. In my mind, I was a card-carrying loser. But my mom came to my rescue. She was my encourager. And she maintained that role in my life literally until the day she died at 92 years old.

The fears of childhood and the stress of being a teen are most often closely guarded secrets of the young person harboring them. Children frequently suffer in silence. Parents need to learn how to recognize the signs of inward stress and torment: nightmares, falling grades, change in temperament, seclusion, tantrums, self-abuse (cutting, etc.), drugs, etc. All of these can add up to trouble, often serious trouble.

When your kids are facing difficult times, what they need more than discipline is encouragement. They do need help, but they need the right kind of help. Encourage them, pray with them, and spend time with them if you want to see them healed. You may even determine that they need professional help; if so, by all means, get it for them.

Provide for them in all of the ways that you can: material, emotional, psychological, and spiritual.

DAY THREE

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

The spectrum of human emotions is like a kaleidoscope, many colored and ever changing. We live in an emotional world dominated by emotional people making emotional decisions. And emotions, not reason, govern most people's behavior. Satan delights in marginalizing the Christian through destructive emotional patterns. No one is immune to these insidious emotions.

Emotions can be messy, debilitating, and destructive. What can we do when our emotions run wild and threaten to overwhelm us? And worse, what happens when we lose control of our emotions, and they begin to dominate and blackmail us? We need to learn that our negative emotions are not a weakness, not really. They make us human; everyone has emotions.

Emotions are a fact of life, but that doesn't mean we have to experience them in a negative way. God does not simply remove the destructive emotions that taunt us and haunt us. Emotions are a key component of our human experience. Instead, He does something far better, far more useful: He replaces our destructive emotions with emotions that are Spirit-filled.

CREATION:	THE FALL:	RESTORATION:
Created as emotional beings	Negative and harmful emotions appeared	Emotions can honor God and express His heart and character
Emotions were positive, helpful, edifying, and satisfying	Emotions became negative and controlling	We have the capacity to keep our emotions from controlling us. We can enjoy God, others, and ourselves

CREATION:	THE FALL:	RESTORATION:
We could enjoy our feelings	Emotions have the ability to blackmail us and hold us captive	We are free from bondage to our emotions. Emotions allow us to seek help and pursue change.
We could communicate emotions in healthy ways	We could not express emotions at all, or we expressed them in unhealthy ways	We have the Holy Spirit working through us to express our emotions in healthy ways

EMOTIONS ARE INDICATORS OF THE REAL PROBLEM

Basically, emotions tell us what we feel is right or what we feel is wrong, in a world that we experience as pleasure vs. pain. Emotions are the means by which our body and mind communicate with us. If we can learn to understand what our emotions are trying to tell us, then our emotions can serve as indicators to our deeper problems, to our actual needs.

When our emotions become messy and controlling, that's a clear sign that we've let them become more true to us than God's Word. This is why it is so important for us to constantly ask ourselves, "Why do I feel the way I feel?" Just look at David practicing this very discipline:

"Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?"

Psalms 42:5a

There is a reason we feel the way we do; we need to listen to what our emotions are trying to tell us.

ALLOW YOUR EMOTIONS TO SEEK GOD FOR HEALING

God wants to help us handle our emotions:

“[Cast] the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.”

1 Peter 5:7, Amplified Bible

“Cast your burden on the Lord [releasing the weight of it] and He will sustain you; He will never allow the [consistently] righteous to be moved (made to slip, fall, or fail).”

Psalms 55:22, Amplified Bible

EXPECTATIONS, ANGER, AND BITTERNESS

Throughout life, we all develop expectations. Usually, we arrive at these expectations by comparing ourselves with others, or we take them in from comments other people make, or from things they may imply. Some of our expectations are born out of valid needs in our lives, like being loved and accepted, or feeling secure. But when our expectations are not met—especially not in the ways we want or expect them to be met, by others or by God—then our default emotional reaction is often anger.

Anger is one of the strongest of our emotions. This is why the Bible warns us to “be angry, and yet do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26). Anger is not sin in and of itself, and it is not the problem; it only becomes a problem when we do not deal with it properly.

Prevent anger: Yield your expectations and rights to God. Yielding means that we choose to allow God to meet our needs in the ways He sees as best, rather than in the way we might want to. We choose to trust Him, looking to Him as the source of all our contentment, joy, and security, instead of looking to circumstances or to other people.

Acknowledge your anger—to yourself and to God. Sometimes our anger may actually be masking other painful emotions, such as fear or hurt. It may be less

painful for us to experience anger than to deal with the hurt. It is vital that we express our anger to God and allow Him to reveal its causes to us. If we try to deny or suppress our anger, it will simply crop up in other places in our behavior, and it will eventually affect our emotional, and perhaps even our physical health.

The danger of unresolved anger: Bitterness. The Bible defines bitterness as “resentfulness” or “harshness” (refer to Ephesians 4:31 and Hebrews 12:15). When we do not deal with our anger, when we refuse to address it—or even attempt to suppress it altogether—over time, that anger calcifies into bitterness. Following are a few facts about bitterness:

- Bitterness comes from feeling that some right you believe you are entitled to has been violated.
- Bitterness harms and damages us emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
- Your bitterness doesn’t just affect you; it will contaminate all of your relationships.
- Unresolved bitterness grows deeper and deeper over time, compounding its pain with resentment, vengeance, ingratitude, and eventually depression.

HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL HURTS:

THE R.E.A.C.T. PROCESS

R Recognize ...the real problem.

E Evaluate ...your thoughts. Ask God what you are thinking.

A Affirm ...by admitting that you alone are accountable for your emotions.

C Confront ...in faith. Acknowledge that emotions are messy, and that you may have allowed your emotions to become more real to you than God’s Word.

T Trust ...in God, His Word, and the Holy Spirit to work in your life.

Recognizing our emotions. Be aware of what's really happening inside you. As soon as you can tell that you are responding from a place of emotion, rather than from God's biblical truth, ask yourself, "Has something made me produce this emotion, or do I feel this all the time?" In either case, recognizing your emotions—and their source(s)—is key to beginning to deal with them.

Evaluating our emotions. Now that you've realized you are reacting from your emotions, try to identify the specific emotion(s) you're feeling. Give them names. For each one, talk with God. Ask Him what's triggering it. Is it a specific person (or persons)? Is it some situation or circumstance? What brings your emotions to the surface?

Affirming our emotions. Affirming simply means admitting that there's something in your life that you need God to deal with on your behalf. It's so much easier just to become upset at a person, rather than dealing with what's really going on inside us. But the Bible teaches that we are accountable for the decisions we make. Remember: you are responsible for your emotion, no matter the cause. Other people cannot put emotion inside us; they can simply bring it out.

Confronting our emotions. You cannot appease an emotion. Emotions are not our enemies; your goal is not to "defeat" them. Simply confront each emotion in faith, then allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. Even when it feels like it's taking a long time, God's promises never fail (2 Peter 3:9; Philippians 1:6). The Holy Spirit will empower you to overcome—not your emotions, but the destructive power that emotions have had in your life.

Trusting God. The only "work" that you can do in this process is in these steps. Once you have brought your emotions before God, the Holy Spirit will have to do the rest. You cannot effect real or meaningful changes in your lifestyle apart from His work in you.

EXERCISE: 6 STEPS TO EMOTIONAL FREEDOM

1. **In everything give thanks!** When you give thanks, you are turning the situation over to the Lord for Him to handle (1 Peter 5:7).
2. **Accept the fact that God has a purpose in this.** God uses the troubles Jesus spoke of in John 16:33. He uses our emotions to refine our faith into a God-shaped faith (Romans 8:28).
3. **Allow experience to build your endurance.** Endurance only comes through the things we experience. The apostle James admonishes us to let endurance have its perfect work in us (James 1:4). Endurance is how God ultimately turns every trial into triumph.
4. **Stand on God's promises.** Begin every day by thanking God for the good things in your life.
5. **Trust God to do what's right in your life.** Obviously, this is much more easily said than done. But we can trust God's Word, and He gives us this exact promise in 1 Peter 4:19.
6. **Start each day filled with the Holy Spirit.** Besides Jesus, God's great gift to us is the gift of the Spirit (John 14:26; John 14:16). It is through His filling that we begin the grand adventure of authentic Christian living.

DAY FOUR

MAKING FORGIVENESS PRACTICAL

The Biblical purpose of forgiveness is to bring us personal freedom, to release us from bondage. Forgiveness is a powerful spiritual weapon when we use it with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If either (or both) of your parents were AWOL parents, forgiveness is where you will find the power to avoid “mimicking” AWOL onto your own children.

HOW FORGIVENESS WORKS

The Bible makes very clear that forgiveness is to stand alone. God gave us forgiveness as a free gift, which then gives us the strength to extend that same forgiveness to those who wrong us. In fact, God commands us to forgive those who wrong us—and to do so quickly.

Forgiveness means releasing our offender to God and trusting Him to administer His justice, in His way and in His timing. Forgiveness is our deliberate decision to cancel some debt that is owed to us. It is giving up the right to punish, to get even, to judge or condemn the person for what they have done. Forgiveness is giving up the demand that they make right the wrong they committed. God’s forgiveness is a volitional choice of faith. And forgiveness is clearly very important to God; either we choose to give away our forgiveness, or God will withhold His forgiveness from us (Mark 11:25).

Forgiving doesn’t mean that we wait until we start to feel warm and friendly toward our offender. On the contrary, it means we make a conscious decision to obey God and then allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, so that we can reclaim what is ours in Christ! Sometimes, if we don’t feel we’re at a place where we are ready to forgive, we can ask the Holy Spirit to change our desire (our will) and make us willing to forgive.

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another,

and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

Colossians 3:12–13

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Ephesians 4:32

FORGIVENESS PRAYER

When you have someone you need to forgive, read the following prayer aloud:

Father God,

Today, I choose to forgive (name of offender) for (list all offenses in detail, proclaiming forgiveness over each one). I wash his/her feet in the blood of Jesus, and I ask for healing on his/her life. I repent for agreeing with the enemy regarding (offender’s name). I ask that You return to me all that the enemy has stolen from me through this injury. And I ask that You will return to (offender) all that the enemy has stolen from him/her, too. I recognize that my battle is not against flesh and blood, but against Satan and his schemes. Thank You for the forgiveness that I have received once and for all by the finished work of the Cross! I apply this forgiveness to (offender) in Jesus’ Name.

Amen.

“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good...”

Genesis 50:20a

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:28

DEALING WITH THE EMOTIONAL PROCESS

Forgiveness is not the means to alleviate our emotions. To try to use forgiveness as a balm for our anger (or for some other emotion) nullifies its great power. Once

we have truly forgiven someone for their offense, we need to ask God to walk us through the process of healing our emotions. Nowhere in the Bible are we told to put on or put off forgiveness. But we are told to put off the negative emotions, not by forgiveness, but by obedient faith, and to put on God's truth.

"...lay aside [put off] the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Ephesians 4:22–24 (addition and emphasis mine)

We ask the Holy Spirit to help us through this painful emotional process because He is our Comforter and our Strength. He was there at the time the injury occurred, and He knows how to walk us through our healing. We ask God to heal us from all that has happened, to release us from our expectations, and to keep us from allowing bitterness to take root. By asking God to bring us emotional healing, we begin to dismantle the strongholds that hold us captive and to regain the freedom that is ours by what Jesus did for us at the Cross!

Allowing the Holy Spirit to heal you from your negative emotions (bitterness, anger, etc.) can feel like having a heavy burden or weight taken off your shoulders. Christ has truly set you free from being controlled by any emotion. The more you learn to walk by the Spirit, the more love will become the controlling factor in your life.

WHEN EMOTIONS LINGER

Even after we have made the choice to forgive, some emotions may still linger. Our emotions will eventually reflect God's heart as we continue to renew our minds with truth and reaffirm our decision to forgive.

GOD

FORGIVENESS IS:

canceling a debt owed
releasing the offender to God
yielding our rights to God
trusting God to redeem the situation
obedience to God
yielding our right to punish
not seeking revenge or getting even
not judging or condemning
not keeping score
extending mercy and grace
a conscious choice
saying "yes" to God and "no" to our flesh
liberating and healing for us
life giving
spiritual warfare
done in the power of the Holy Spirit

FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

ignoring/disregarding the wrong done
tolerating /excusing the offender
contingent on an apology
forgetting about the wrong done
letting time pass
"gutting it out" and pretending
being nice to the person
keeping silent
simply saying, "I forgive you"
conditional (Matthew 18:21-22)
based on feelings
limited to the offender still living
remaining a victim or returning to the abuse
bringing it up again/a tool for emotional blackmail
effective without the Holy Spirit

SELF

THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS

1. Acknowledge your AWOL parents to God. Acknowledge your own AWOL-like characteristics to God.
2. Express to God how the hurt made you feel, and how you have made others feel.
3. Express to God your deliberate decision to forgive your AWOL parents, yourself and/or your spouse based on what Jesus did for you on the Cross. Agree with God that you are giving up your right to punish or to get even, as well as your right to judge, condemn, or make right the wrong done. Acknowledge that you trust God to take care of that person in His own timing, and in His way.

4. Accept the AWOL parent as they are. You are yielding your expectations to God. Ask for healing in their life. Do the same for yourself and/or your spouse.
5. Be willing to risk being hurt again. Ask God to take down any walls of self-protection you may have built up over time. Trust God to heal you and to protect you if you do get hurt again.
6. Express to God your emotions that came from the offense. Trust God to meet your needs, and give Him your emotions for healing.
7. Trust the Holy Spirit to begin renewing your mind about who God is as your Father from the homework on Day 5. (As mentioned earlier, for further reading, refer to *Pneumanetics Original* Book 15: *ABBA Father (Knowing God as Father)* and *Pneumanetics Original* Book 16: *A God For All Seasons*, available for purchase at www.histruthtransforms.org.)
8. Trust the Holy Spirit to begin the process of renewing your mind as you start putting off any negative thoughts and emotions and replacing them by putting on God's Truth.

DAY FIVE

KNOWING GOD AS FATHER

Many, if not most, of the emotional struggles we face are directly due to deprivation. Deprivation is defined as “having missed something vitally necessary to a person’s emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being.” In this case, we mean being deprived of a relationship with one or both parents.

This is the reason the Bible stresses so strongly that we need to know God: it’s the only way we can escape the trap of deprivation. When I say “knowing God,” what I mean is knowing God in the way that the Bible intends. In practice, most people have a very warped perception of God because of our natural tendency to formulate our sense of God based upon our earthly fathers.

Most people don’t even know how to know God intimately. And when we don’t know God intimately, our faith can grow no larger than whatever information we are able to gather about Him. Our faith and conscience are inseparably related to our knowledge.

God wants to smother us with His love. The apostle Paul tells us to pursue love above all else (1 Corinthians 13:13; 14:1). That word “pursue” means to make it your passion. How? By asking the Holy Spirit to do what He came to do: to bring the love of God on you in profusion (Romans 5:5). Love is God’s, His special kind of business, and we are to go after it with a passion. Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7). Make His love your present possession by faith. (For more about how you can know God, look at Pneumanetics Original Book 16: A God For All Seasons, available for purchase at www.gtnonline.org).

1. Read Matthew 11:27. What did Jesus come to do? Is it possible for you to know God by knowing Jesus?

2. Read Ephesians 1:16-17. In your own words, explain the importance the apostle Paul placed on knowing God personally and experientially.

3. Read Colossians 1:10. In your own words, explain what Paul is saying about knowing God in this verse.

Following is a list of characteristics from God's Word about God as a role model. If one of these traits of God does not fit into your belief system, it will be difficult for you to accept and receive it. If this is the case, you need to devote some time to asking the Holy Spirit to help you accept the Truth from His Word over your own emotions.

- **He cares!** "...casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).
- **He is always available!** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).
- **He always has glad thoughts of us!** "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand" (Psalm 139:17-18).

- **He comforts!** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction” (2 Corinthians 1:3–4a).
- **He is an encourager, filling us with joy and peace!** “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace...” (Romans 15:13a).
- **He accepts us unconditionally!** “...accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).
- **He is a Father to us!** “‘I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:18).

This list could go on and on with God’s promises from His Word. The Bible leaves no doubt that God is our perfect role model for being parents; He is the divine Mentor in childrearing.

4. From the list on the previous page, consider each characteristic of God, taking time to meditate and reflect on each one. You need to accept by faith that God is each of these things to you personally. And because of this truth, the Holy Spirit has equipped you to live out each of these acts toward others—even if your feelings don’t want to. When you are obedient to extend these traits to others, your feelings will follow.
5. If we fail to know God, it means that we have not asked the Holy Spirit to introduce us to Him. Take time now to ask the Holy Spirit to make these characteristics of God real to you.

APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AWOL FATHERS

All behavior produces somewhat predictable characteristics. Over the years, we have counseled hundreds of couples and individuals, both products of AWOL parents and AWOL parents themselves. The following list describes behavioral patterns we always find present (at least to some degree) in AWOL fathers.

These characteristics are generalized, so it's likely you will identify with some of them yourself. The purpose of this list is to help you identify and come to terms with behavioral patterns—whether you observe these behaviors in yourself or in others close to you. Please take the time to read through the list carefully and thoughtfully.

Dominant Mother/Passive Father. Control is the dominant factor. To keep the peace, the father has abdicated his role in the home. He may be a lion in the office, but he's a lamb at home. Many children resent their father for not protecting them from their mother's control. In most cases, parents recreate an environment similar to the one they grew up in. In our experience, Dominant Mother/Passive Father is always present in cases that involve bulimia and/or anorexia.

Maternal Hostility and/or Dependence. In our matriarchal society, most men grow up with maternal dependence. (This means that their mother had the major impact in their life growing up.) However, if a great deal of hostility existed between mother and son, it almost always shows up again in marriage and in relationships with other women. A man who grew up angry with his mother usually makes his wife a surrogate of that same anger, redirecting what he felt for his mother toward his wife.

FatherHunger. FatherHunger comes from lack of relationship between father and child. In boys, FatherHunger creates an emotional need for relationship with an older male. Young men often report latent homosexuality, when in fact what actually they are experiencing is the subconscious desire to try to fulfill their unmet emotional or "Daddy" needs.

Emotional Immaturity. A male child who receives excessive doting often tries to make his wife his surrogate mother, expecting her to baby him as well, and to wait on his every need. Often, he resents their children because they infringe on his time with “Mommy.”

Sexual Activity. Potentially exhibiting an enormous sex drive, the man uses sex as a security blanket. After almost every argument, he wants sex for comfort. He may bring his wife small gifts to obligate her to sex, which instead has the undesired effect of making her feel like a prostitute—that is, as though he is paying her for sex.

Emotional Instability. A man can behave like a bear and still be fragile. In counseling, we often find that men’s emotional makeup tends to be more fragile than most women’s. Many men bottle their emotions over time, only to see them later explode, releasing them all at once in a raging torrent. Other men remain stoic, avoiding conflict and decisions, hoping to wait out each storm until it blows over. Men who struggle with emotional instability usually will do almost anything to avoid confrontation.

Emotional Insecurity. Most women seek security through relationships. But many men seek safety through passivity. They hide by staring at television or by constantly working. Emotionally insecure men tend to marry women who are secure enough that they will be able to uphold the role of mother to his role as perpetual child.

Possessiveness. A man’s insecurity may extend to his marriage relationship, causing him to practically suffocate his wife with suspicion, constantly checking up on her. Possessiveness makes him deeply distrustful, suspecting her every move. Often he obsessively calls her, whether at work or on her cell phone, keeping constant tabs on her whereabouts.

Poor Self-Image. Many men suffer from a sense of inadequacy and fear of failure. They compensate through performance, trying to demonstrate their competence, yet they are still prone to failure through self-sabotage. A man with a poor self-image often lacks ambition, frequently encouraging his wife to become the chief breadwinner in their home.

Sense of Insignificance. Some men withdraw or become easily irritable. A man who perceives himself as little may act out the part he believes he inhabits. Most men with insignificance issues tend to be antisocial, even avoiding social functions, making their wives attend alone.

Combativeness. An AWOL father usually has few (if any) close male friends. He perceives men close to his own age as threats, so he tends to be combative toward them. He may even try to undermine his perceived rivals at their endeavors. He may dismiss this bad behavior as “competitiveness,” clearly trying to “win” against other men his own age.

Sense of Disapproval. This man feels that most people—and especially his wife—disapprove of him as a person and of his choices. He retaliates against the world through subtle punishments. A man who senses disapproval often also believes that his parents disapprove of him.

Maternal Affection Drive. Men who were either doted on too much or ignored by their mothers both tend to act out in the same way: by exhibiting strong mother needs. The man usually expects his wife to fulfill these needs, unintentionally trying to create a marriage structure that expresses wife-as-mother and husband-as-child.

Passivity. Basically a man’s defense against a controlling wife, he uses passivity to make himself into a “frigid male.” In most cases, this man comes from a home where his father was passive. He refuses to take the lead in decisions in the home, forcing leadership upon his wife—whether she wants it or not.

Indecisiveness. In a peculiar juxtaposition, a man can be equally as indecisive at home as he is extremely decisive in the office. He leaves decision-making to his wife, “freeing” himself to blame her when things go wrong.

Stoicism. The stoic avoids conflict and confrontation through shutting down all communication, including body language, making it impossible for his wife to know where she stands with him. He tends to repress his emotions altogether, rather than expressing them.

Dialogue Deficiency. This man avoids intense interpersonal discussion. He withdraws if he feels attacked. He may project onto his wife, expecting her to know what he is thinking—even though he won't tell her. He lacks fundamental communication skills.

Perfectionism. A perfectionist is particular, wanting most things in his life a certain way. He makes unreasonable demands of others, yet excuses himself from the same standards. The source is often poor self-image combined with a history of self-imposed legalism. Even when others reach his high standards, he is never satisfied. (For more on this topic, refer to session 12 of our book, *The Torah Syndrome*, available for purchase from gtnonline.org.)

Blandness. Neither as ambitious nor as driving as his wife, the bland man is always overshadowed by her. He settles for absolute neutrality, avoiding any risks that might raise his head above the crowd. He is usually in a job that is beneath him but that affords safety.

Unrealistic Expectations. Related to perfectionism and a sense of inadequacy, this man expresses his unrealistic expectations through tyranny over his wife and children. This man also tends to be an overly strict disciplinarian.

The Put-Down. The put-down insults his wife in front of others, both privately and publicly. He belittles her in private at home. At the core of this behavior, he is subconsciously attempting to bring others lower to make himself appear higher—thus compensating for his poor self-image.

The Turnaround. Using subtle twists and psychological manipulation, the turnaround twists conversation so that his wife is always wrong. Over time, the wife may even begin to question her own sanity. It is important to this man that he always be “right.”

Self-Centeredness. The selfish man expects others to wait on him, although most who behave in this way cannot recognize it in themselves. In most cases, he hides his poor self-image behind a veil of false humility.

SuperParenting. SuperDad makes himself into a far better father than husband, spending more time with the children than with his wife. The children always come first. For SuperDads, this single characteristic tends to be their dominant trait.

Role Reversal. A role reverser resists accepting his leadership role at home, forcing his wife to fill the leadership void, robbing her of her femininity. Ironically, men who refuse to lead at home are often very strong leaders in other settings. A dead giveaway for role reversers is that the wife handles the family's finances by herself. **Maternal Twist.** He married his wife to be his mother. We have even observed instances in counseling where men who were dating outside the marriage would bring dates home seeking their wives' approval. He typically expects his wife to be the primary breadwinner.

Homebound. Some men only feel safe at home, so they resist leaving the house at all costs. A homebound man constantly makes excuses, inventing reasons to stay home, even when it means the family will go out without him.

Workaholic. Workaholics are very common. The workaholic man centers his entire identity around his work. He often places himself on the performance treadmill. He works long hours, usually at the expense of his wife and children. He may try to justify his time away by pointing out all of the material things that he "provides." However, even with as much as he works, this may not necessarily correlate to financial success; rather, he equates his worth with his level of busyness.

Isolationist. Not to be confused with the Homebound man, this man may actually go out, and he may even participate in certain social activities. However, he routinely isolates himself from emotional involvement and genuine connection with others. He often gives "things," rather than giving of himself.

Status Quo. Status quo man tends to resist outside help with marital problems because it might force change, but also because admitting the need for help seems like failure to him. He has a tendency to not rock the boat. He also tends to avoid conflict and confrontation.

Failure-Prone. Some men fear failure more than anything else. They may even have big ideas and grand visions, but they will never act on any of them. Fear of failure overshadows everything else. They equate failure with ridicule and rejection.

Lack of Character. This man lacks character in general, but especially when compared to his wife. His weaknesses may manifest as laziness, lack of integrity, indecisiveness, or other negative character traits.

Misplaced Mindset. This man has a difficult time accepting his appropriate role as leader in the home. He may adopt a “little boy” attitude with his wife, acting more childlike than their actual children. A man with a misplaced mindset often identifies more easily with women than he does with other men.

Homosexual Tendencies. Lacking close and intimate relationship with a father can often compromise normalized sexual orientation. This man’s issue is not actually sexual orientation at all, rather the constant drive to meet the emotional (Daddy) needs missing from his life. He may exhibit latent homosexual characteristics, or others may even mistakenly identify him as homosexual. Men who are perceived this way are more vulnerable to homosexual advances. We have even seen cases where men have left their wives and families to actively pursue a fully realized homosexual lifestyle.

Perceived Physical/Masculinity Shortcomings. This man often compares himself to other men, believing that he has not developed musculature similar to them. He is also far more likely to believe that his genitalia are smaller or less developed than that of other men. In general, he tends constantly to doubt his own masculinity overall.

Self-Righteousness. The self-righteous man often wraps himself in a cloak of religiosity, especially if he feels his wife is angry or attacking him verbally. He tends to exhibit legalistic, often extremist values.

The Ostrich. The ostrich attempts to avoid controversy and conflict at all costs. He ignores obvious problems, “burying his head in the sand,” hoping that they will just

go away. His constant avoidances generate great frustration for those closest to him.

Relater. Although Relaters appear to be more open than other men, often they actually relate better with women than with men. Relaters will candidly discuss issues with women, although they tend to be more guarded around other men.

Intimidated. This man allows his wife to emotionally bully him, tacitly giving her control and surrendering his leadership responsibilities in their home. An intimidated man often also allows older men to coerce him.

Manipulative. Manipulators are especially controlling in the bedroom, expecting sex on their terms, whenever they demand it. In general, they exert control over various situations to force their way.

Demanding. A demander is spoiled and childlike. He insists on having his way, even when it puts out others. While a demander is similar to a self-centered man, he is distinguishable primarily by his tendency to throw tantrums or to create emotionally charged situations to force the outcome he wants.

Unforgiving/Unforgetting. This man claims to forgive the mistakes of others, but he brings them up again whenever it suits him, whether to win arguments or to “put people in their place.” Although he says that he “forgives and forgets,” in truth, he keeps mental (or even written) lists of wrongs he feels others have perpetrated against him.

Victim Mentality. The victim always acts like others are wronging him and putting him out. This is not just a tool of manipulation for him; he actually believes that others have harmed him. A victim will rarely (if ever) admit guilt himself, even when it's obvious and/or evidence is available.

Omission. Rather than behaving negatively towards his wife, this man may simply avoid doing positive things for her, leading her to believe he doesn't think she's worth fighting for.

Father/God Confusion. This man's vision of what God is like is warped or incomplete. He has not experienced true intimacy with God. Although he may even know a lot about God (head knowledge), he does not know God (heart knowledge).

Mistrust. Directed primarily toward his wife, this is a close sibling to jealousy. However, mistrust is not the same as distrust. A mistrusting man feels most vulnerable when his wife is in contact with another man, fearing that she will not protect his masculinity with the outsider.

Soulish. A soulish man tends to try in his own efforts to accomplish spiritual outcomes that can only be fulfilled by God's involvement. Because he does not understand God, his faith tends to be weak, and he doesn't trust God. A soulish man tends to be religious and legalistic, relying on performance and a system of rules-based rewards, rather than on a constantly renewed state of Being.

Conscientious. This personality type can be frustrating to his family, because outside his home, others perceive him as responsible and reasonable, a good guy. In fact, it is important for him to feel that others outside his family value him. As a consequence, the conscientious man tends to overextend himself, so there's little of him "left" for his family at home.

Meticulous. Orderly and organized, a meticulous man's personality borders on clinical obsessive-compulsive disorder. Feeling constant pressure to keep things "neat" and "clean," he may judge his wife as a poor housekeeper if she doesn't live up to his impossible standards. Often, a man raised by a parent (or even, say, a grandmother) who similarly exalted tidiness tends to repeat this behavior in his generation.

Inflexibility. Incapable of even reasonable compromise, an inflexible man refuses to reconsider his position. In general, he tries to coerce his wife to agree with him. In fact, during discussions, the issue itself is less important to him than convincing his wife that she should agree with him.

Fear. A fearful man may not look fearful on the outside, hiding his fear deep within. But his fears steal his energy and confidence, sapping away his faith in God. He feels that God cannot use him, causing paralyzing passivity that turns his fears into self-fulfilling prophecy.

Defensiveness/Denial. Living in constant denial about himself, this man's default reaction to confrontation is to become defensive, even in the face of evidence. His denial may be the result of repeatedly lying not only to others, but even to himself. Self-Abuse. Some men masturbate frequently, even if their wives don't withhold sex from them. While it's impossible to separate masturbation from underlying, likely unaddressed sexual issues, the man views his compulsion simply as a means of relieving stress.

Sensitivity. Some men are overly sensitive, taking even the most casual observation as a specific personal attack. A sensitive man reacts negatively to criticism and easily takes offense, even where none is intended. Most often, a sensitive man will not attempt to clear the air face to face, but instead harbors hurts and anger, replaying negative episodes again and again in his mind. He may also be abusive, either to offset his sensitivity or to discourage unwanted input from others.

Self-Control. Some men seem more disciplined than is necessary (or even possible). Outsiders believe that he simply has everything together. Although his discipline may lead to positive outward results, its source is actually his desire to exert control over as many variables as he can to compensate for those that he cannot.

Non-Assertive. A sort of passive-aggressive form of passivity, a man simply refuses to offer his opinion, even when he actually feels passionate about something. While this behavior may also happen in his workplace, it is most evident at home. It is actually a form of conflict avoidance.

Lack of Ambition. A man's fear of failure and his poor self-image work together to neuter his desire to effect even positive changes in his life. He believes he can avoid failure simply by avoiding risk. This man masks his passivity as contentment for whatever he already has. The feeling of safety is important to him.

Flirtatious. A flirtatious man's behavior should be relatively obvious. He tends to over-compliment and flatter women—especially younger women. In many cases, others see his behavior not as threatening, but as a positive character trait: He always has something kind to say. Some like him, while others express suspicion about his motives. Mainly, he just wants everyone to like him, and he has discovered a positive feedback loop that fuels his ego.

Crisis Responder. While this man is quick and decisive, exuding strength of character, he tends to act only in the event of a crisis. He does his best work under pressure. He seems to thrive on dramatic situations, but under more normal circumstances, he tends toward passivity.

Laid Back Personality. Some men who present themselves as easygoing may actually be quiet and reserved most of the time. Often, however, their laissez-faire attitude is actually a mask for latent anger. This is another form of passivity.

APPENDIX B

POTENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AWOL MOTHERS

These characteristics are generalized, so it's likely you will identify with some of them yourself. The purpose of this list is to help you identify and come to terms with behavioral patterns—whether you observe these behaviors in yourself or in others close to you. Please take the time to read through the list carefully and thoughtfully.

Dominant/Controlling Mother / Passive Father. This is the most common arrangement for the typical emotionally AWOL mother. She feels ambivalent toward her own father (kind of a love/hate relationship), but she tends to be far more critical of her mother. When a daughter grows up under a controlling mother, she doesn't like it. Worse, she fears that she herself will grow up to be just like her. To prevent this happening, the daughter develops her own systems to offset her mother's control over her—and thus ironically becomes a controller herself.

Paternal/Maternal Hostility. A woman who experienced hostility toward her father during childhood most often unconsciously transfers similar ill feelings onto her own husband. (She may also feel equal hostility toward her mother-in-law.) This anger is irrational, not based upon any actual wrongs committed by those she feels hostile towards. A woman may also have intense hostility toward women because a woman abandoned her. She will have intense love/hate toward any mother figure, but she will keep coming back, hoping to receive what she needs the next time. This woman has an inability to receive love (even though she is dying from loneliness and is in great need of affection).

Promiscuity. When as a child a girl does not receive sufficient attention from her father—including appropriate touch and physical affection—she tries to find in many men that which she was denied by the only one who could give it to her (her father). Girls in this position usually begin experimenting with sexual behaviors during puberty, or perhaps even earlier. As she grows older, she will often be willing to trade sex just to be held. A young woman who has been promiscuous tends to marry a father figure. Then, once she is married, she may transfer her own feelings of rejection onto her husband, which complicates—or even eliminates—any physical

aspects of their relationship. This often causes her to stray outside the marriage to get her physical needs met, continuing the destructive cycle.

Lesbian Tendencies. Lacking close relationship with a mother can often compromise normalized sexual orientation for a girl. A woman exhibiting lesbian tendencies is not necessarily expressing a preference for that sexual orientation; rather, she is feeding her constant drive to meet the emotional (Mommy) needs missing from her life. She may exhibit latent lesbian characteristics, and others may even believe that she is a lesbian. Women in this position often find themselves attracted to older women, which can make them vulnerable to same-sex advances.

Boyish Characteristics. A young girl may assume the role of tomboy if she perceives that boys are getting more of what they want—especially the attention and approval of her father. Some young women “grow out” of this behavior, while others continue in it. Often a tomboy is unconsciously trying to become the “her” that she feels her father would accept.

Attraction to Blandness. While most women tend to choose men who are exactly like their fathers—or the exact opposite—still others “play it safe,” selecting neutral or bland men. This woman is particularly vulnerable to men who remind her of her father. She may also have an outside relationship, ironically, most often with yet another man who shares characteristics similar to her father. If a woman attracted to neutrality divorces her husband, she tends to remarry someone else who has the same (or very similar characteristics) to the husband she just left.

Repulsions. The things that most attracted this woman to her husband during courtship become the very things that repulse her sometime after they are married. She may be unaware of this reversal or, even if she does acknowledge it, the change may confuse her as much as it does her husband.

Rationalizing. The wife tends to rationalize any bad or destructive behavior, particularly in situations of immorality. She will likely also exhibit strong denial, if not about the behavior itself, then certainly about even its most obvious consequences. Both the rationalization and the denial are defensive mechanisms to offset feelings

of guilt. In counseling, we have more than once heard a woman insist, “Anything that feels this good can’t be wrong.”

Deception. Some women are more vulnerable to satanic deception than average. They may actually believe it is God’s will for them to be immoral, claiming that they listen to their “inner voice” or that they “follow their heart”—even when “their heart” is clearly leading them away from Christ and from God’s Word.

Maturity Factor. Some women are more mature in many ways than their husbands (especially emotionally). Women who are more mature emotionally will seek help for their relationships, even when their husbands will not. However, these same women often behave immaturely when in the presence of an older male.

Poor Self-image. A woman with poor self-image lacks an appropriate sense of worth and self-esteem. She often sees herself as unattractive, so she unconsciously (or consciously) compensates by using her body to attract men. Even in marriages that may be healthy otherwise, a woman with a poor self-image may sabotage her relationship with her husband because she is constantly sending signals to third parties that she is available—which makes her more vulnerable to their advances.

Fearfulness. Where men fear failure more than anything, this woman fears rejection most. She places most of her security in her relationships. A woman with fearfulness issues also tends to fear men in positions of authority.

Insecurities. A woman who struggles with insecurities tends to feel insecure, unsure of herself. Many are anxiety prone, even doubting their salvation. Insecurity is a major factor in women who seek to gain control.

Control. In almost every relationship that our ministry has counseled, a major factor is that the woman is struggling with issues of control. (As discussed, this issue is directly traceable to Genesis 3:16.) While all women must address the need to control, this is even more true of those who come from insecure backgrounds. They take charge of their emotions and activities, attempting to control their destiny. They will feel the need to be in the superior position in all they do.

Paternal Affection Drive. The “Daddy need,” the degree of a woman’s Paternal Affection Drive, depends on the relationship she had with her father. A wife tries to fulfill her Daddy needs through her husband. When this of course doesn’t work, she may become bitter towards her husband, and she may instead try to find that fulfillment through additional, outside relationships. Women with a strong Paternal Affection Drive tend to be sexually aggressive. Even when a husband is able to meet his wife’s Daddy needs, it most often spells the end of that relationship—because girls do not go to bed with Daddy.

Aggression. An aggressive woman is specifically aggressive in her pursuit of relationships. Many times, she will be guided by immature emotions, rather than by adult considerations. She may be a little girl seeking to get her daddy needs met through sexual encounters. She tends to be flirtatious, impudent, overtly sexual, and promiscuous.

Mothering. Even though this woman possesses strong motherly instincts, still she considers herself inadequate as a mother. She is attracted to men who have a “little boy” mentality. The man she marries is always a man from a similar background, or one who was doted on by a possessive mother.

Expressive. An expressive woman tends to be very creative and competent. In social settings, she normally outshines her husband. The expressive woman often attempts to “explain” her husband to others.

Intellectual. Above average in intelligence, an intellectual woman has a sharp, facile mind. She tends to feel that she is intellectually superior to her husband.

Gregarious. This woman is vivacious, open, warm, and outgoing. An entertainer, she tends to be energized by social gatherings. She often plans, organizes, and hosts events to get her fix.

Trauma. By the time she arrives in counseling, a wife suffering from trauma is already at the point of feeling that if she stays in her marriage for another moment she’s going to lose her mind. Most women at this crossroads are already seeking at least

a separation, and possibly even a divorce.

Self-Centered. A self-centered woman wants to be the center of attention, and is frequently jealous of others, especially when she senses that they are getting attention that should rightly be hers. Often, a self-centered woman is the youngest of her siblings, or she's an only child.

Character Strength. This woman possesses character (integrity, inner strength, self-assurance, etc.) in spades. In most cases, a woman of strong character tends to have more character than her husband.

Misplaced Sexual Mindset. This woman tends to be unresponsive sexually to her marriage partner. In most cases, it's because the relationship dynamic is father/child, where the wife is the little girl, and the husband is subconsciously filling the father role. Women in this position are vulnerable to outside influences, especially from older men in father figure positions. In fact, most women with this dynamic believe that they are in love with the counselor or pastor. Couples dealing with this mindset need to get into counseling sooner rather than later.

Comparer. This woman tends to constantly compare her husband to other men. And when she does, her husband always comes up lacking. She may fantasize sexually about other men. A comparer also compares herself to other women, and again always determines that they are better than she is.

Incestuous Attitude. Particularly if a couple has a strong father/child dynamic, the wife often develops uncomfortable feelings related to incest. She may not understand why, but she finds even the thought of sex with her husband repulsive. The root is because they have developed inappropriate roles for each other—he as the father and she as his daughter.

Little Girl Mentality. This woman often adopts a “little girl” attitude around men, and is generally naïve concerning men. Men often misread the signals she is sending, and she is genuinely shocked when they respond by making advances. She may not realize that what she is communicating is interest and availability.

Self-Condensation. Suffering from what we call the “Martyr Complex,” this woman always feels she is the victim. However, she also often takes all of the blame for things that go wrong. In battered wife situations, both of these characteristics are always present.

Hostility. This woman is angry, openly hostile toward her husband, even to the point of rage. When she senses that her control may be threatened, she uses her anger to intimidate her husband back into submission.

Frustration. Often a sister behavior to Hostility, the frustrated woman tends to feel she is “trapped” in her marriage. Usually, she has carved out a fair amount of control in the relationship, and when others in the family try to stand up for themselves, she responds by expressing frustration, acting like her life circumstances are overwhelming her.

Resistance. This woman tends to resist any attempts her husband makes to lead when she perceives that it may threaten her sense of control. They will battle over money, the house, and most areas that require any amount of decision-making. In most cases, this is the same woman who insists that she wants her husband to be the spiritual leader of their home, and yet when he actually tries to lead, she actively resists his leadership.

Selective Submissiveness. It is as difficult for a wife to learn submission as it is for her husband to learn leadership. Most will pick and choose what they will submit to, and when. Specifically, they usually choose not to submit in areas they feel might compromise their sense of control.

Mistrust. Directed primarily toward her husband, mistrust is not the same thing as distrust. It is not that the wife fears that her husband may be unfaithful to her (distrust), but that she does not feel she can entrust him with ensuring her emotional well-being. Most often, women who struggle with mistrust come from a background where the men in their lives had a tendency to let them down.

Strong Maternal Instinct. The woman with a strong maternal instinct tends to favor her children over her husband. In some cases, her preference may be so exaggerated that she unconsciously uses caring for her children to justify neglecting her husband. (This is the wife's equivalent of SuperParenting.)

Unrealistic Expectations. This woman sets unreasonable, impossibly high standards and expectations for her husband and children, but also for herself. She tends to criticize and to nag others.

Overachiever. An overachiever will usually cast her competitiveness and her desire for accomplishment as a positive trait. The distinction is that she takes performance to an extreme, to the point where it harms her relationships. Overachievers are most often competent and above average in intelligence. They also tend to be legalistic and exacting.

Demanding of Rights. Once again a manifestation of a desire to control, the wife will use the veneer of “standing up for herself” to justify bending others to her will. She tends to be pushy and domineering, often relying on guilt to manipulate others.

Hyperactive. This woman overbooks her schedule, involving herself (and her family) in as many activities as possible. In general, she actually does accomplish more than others; however, usually it is at the cost of burning out others around her, and possibly even herself. She remains in a constant state of Doing, as opposed to Being—tying her value to how much she can do, rather than Whose she is.

Under the Rug Sweeper. Some women are very neat and tidy in areas that people can see, but downright sloppy in areas where they can hide things. To outsiders, this woman's workplace may seem chaotic. But she tends to work better in this situation, taking comfort that all of her things are close at hand. Women with this condition tend to be collectors and, in more extreme cases, even hoarders.

Role Confusion. When asked, this woman will struggle to explain the difference between a husband and father beyond that a relationship with a husband includes sex, where a relationship with a father does not. Often, other behaviors will also

be present, most related to inappropriate father/child roles between her and her husband.

Crisis Generator. This woman tends to manufacture crises within the relationship, especially if her husband is stoic and avoids regular communication. She forces him to give her his attention by creating problems he cannot ignore.

Relater. Although Relaters appear to be more open and gregarious than other women, often they actually relate better with men than with other women.

Father/God Confusion. This woman's vision of what God is like is warped or incomplete. She has not experienced true intimacy with God. Although she may even know a lot about God (head knowledge), she does not know God (heart knowledge).

Honesty. Often displaying gut-level honesty, this woman has a tendency to confront. She may dismiss her own rudeness and inappropriate social interactions as "just being honest."

Disrespect. The disrespectful woman is unwilling to show any respect to her husband—even when he demonstrates characteristics "worthy" of her respect.

Emotional Instability. Easily excitable and prone to renegade emotions, this woman tends not to be afraid of failure, but she fears rejection intensely. Although she may think carefully about decisions she needs to make, she tends to base these more on her feelings than on logic or reason. She is fully confident in her relationships, both with men and within her own home.

Dependency. This woman clearly depends on men in general, whether for support or emotional validation or both. Even so, she is usually not submissive to her husband's leadership.

Seductive. A seductive woman may be either overtly or covertly so. Her seductiveness is generally directed toward men other than her husband.

Manipulator. Some women tend to try to enlist others to help them achieve their own ends. While they often may not even be aware of this behavior, it is of course based in their need to be in control of the situations around them.

Impulsive. Similar to an emotionally unstable woman, this woman is primarily motivated by her emotions. However, she typically acts without thinking; almost immediately when an idea comes to her, she tends to act on it without weighing the possible consequences.

Dramatic. A dramatic woman specializes in making a scene when it suits her. Most often, she generates drama as a manipulative tool to exercise control and get her way.

Abusive. This woman is verbally or even physically abusive. In most cases, a woman who behaves in this way learned it in her own home growing up. The worse the abuse that she observed or suffered, the worse an abuser she will be.

Poise. A woman with poise can keep herself together when in social settings, even though she may be an emotional wreck at home. To people who don't live with her and see her other side, she seems to accept most challenges with grace and calm.

Eating Disorder(s). This woman uses food for comfort, for control, or for self-abuse. She could be at either end of the spectrum, compulsively overeating or suffering from anorexia and/or bulimia. No matter how it manifests, she has an unhealthy, inappropriate relationship with food.