

Loving Clean: Bringing Relationships to Life!

Introduction:

- Many people have no idea what they are eating. They eat for pleasure and convenience not necessarily for health. They eat what they were raised to eat, therefore they do not know any better. Others are attempting to eat right but do not know that they are putting toxins into their body. For example:
 - Ie. Flint Michigan water was recently discovered to have lead in it. Lead in your water is toxic. Yet the water satisfied thirst, grew plants, bathed people all the while unknowingly poisoning them. Like the people of Michigan many people are toxic in how they relate to others. Yet they have no idea they are poisoning their relationships.
 - I really love raspberries. I like raspberry filled doughnuts. Dark chocolate and raspberries, Raspberry flavored gum. Ie. A few years ago it was discovered that raspberry flavoring in many foods was actually from the anal glands of a beaver. Therefore legally called "natural flavoring." Most companies have since changed from beaver behind secretions to chemically made raspberry flavoring. Yum! There are things that we bring into relationships unknowingly which we think are normal but are actually poisoning them and are quite repulsive.
 - 100 years ago the average american ate 4 pounds of sugar a year. 50 years ago that was bumped up to 12 pounds of sugar a year. Today the USDA reports that the average american consumes 152 pounds of sugar a year! And we wonder why we are fat, stroking, and inflamed. We are eating and not thinking about what we eat. Many are toxic in relating to others and wonder why their relationships are going nowhere, are paralyzed and painful.
- Let me list the specific toxins that Joshua covered last week that we may be bringing into our relationships: Bullying, enabler, codependent, controller, hostage taker, obsessive and the list can go on. When eating you can purpose to 'eat clean. And when relating you can purpose to 'love clean.' It's about restoration! Jn 10:10 Vitality!!

"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God." (1 John 4:7, NLT)

I. What is Loving Clean?

- A. Before I answer what 'Loving Clean' is, lets make sure we understand what it means to be toxic. The dictionary defines toxic as "poisonous." And a poison is a substance that can seriously injure an organism or destroy life. So toxically relat-

ing to others poisons the relationship, bringing injury and destroying the life of the relationship.

1. A toxic relationship is also called an unhealthy relationship and if toxic enough it can be called a bad relationship. When a relationship is toxic it is taking away life from that relationship.
2. Joshua said this last week: We also must realize that, "Even a **good relationship** has periods of behaviors that would be labeled as toxic on the part of one or both individuals. Human beings, after all, are not perfect. We learn as we go, hoping that our basic style of relating to others that **we learned from** our families, friends, and community is at least reasonably effective rather than **healthy**." Emerson Eggerich We are going for healthy relating not just reasonably effective relating. Lets define loving clean:
 - B. Loving Clean is the ability to love others without bringing toxic tendencies into the relationship. It is the ability to love in a Christ like way that esteems, edifies, and encourages others. Loving clean is life giving. It brings life into the relationship.
 1. Ie. Just like the physical body has to expend energy to clean up the hazardous material in it and make repairs. Relationships that are constantly having to clean up toxins are draining and wearisome. When the physical body is free of hazardous materials it is able to focus on building strong cells and organs. Relationships that are free of toxins thrive because they are not spending time on repairing but upon building stronger.
 - C. Loving Clean is life giving! It brings relationships to life.
 1. The body of Christ is called to thrive in its relationships. After all we are living stones connected to the Chief Cornerstone! 1 Peter 2:5 We are to pulsate with the life of God.
 2. Ie. Luke 7:44 "*Simon do you see this woman?*" Jesus was calling Simon the Pharisee to lose his toxic approach to sinners and see them as God does. Jesus words gave dignity to the woman causing their relationship to thrive.
 3. Therefore if you find you are relating to others in a toxic way you need to detox!

II. How Do I Detox Relationships?

- A. What does it mean to detox? Detox is the removal of toxic substances from a living organism. Regarding relationships (which are living organisms), detox is the removal of toxic behaviors that poison relationships or steal life. We do this by:

- B. One, Purpose to love clean. It is a decision you must make. Just like you can purpose to eat cleaner you can purpose to love cleaner, knowing that clean loving brings life/vitality to your relationships.
1. Recognize when you are loving clean.
 2. Recognize the life that comes into relationships when you love well. This reinforces and encourages you to go deeper in loving well in all relationships. Ie. When I did body for life a few years ago it was the best that I had felt in many years because I was giving my body what it needed. Ie. California and the return home. What you put into your relationship can cause them to thrive.
- C. Two, identifying the toxic elements/behaviors which you bring into the relationship. How do you do this?
1. Focus on 1 Cor 13 "*Love is patient and kind* (controllers). *Love is not jealous* (obsessives) *or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way* (controller, bully, hostage taker). *It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, NLT)
 2. Focus on Gal 5:22: "*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*" (Galatians 5:22, NLT) Are these evident in your relationships?
 3. Family/others, can be really good at helping you see this if you ask for their help. But if you ask for it don't go ballistic when they tell you.
- D. Three, identify the toxic elements that others bring into the relationship.
1. Why do you need to do this? So you do not get poisoned or begin operating in toxic responses.
 - a) To help determine how to keep yourself from becoming toxic.
 - b) To help the other person (*when opportunity arises*) to help them to detox.
- E. Four, once you have identified toxic behavior begin eliminating the toxic activity.
1. If you want to eat clean so that you are healthier physically, you eliminate processed sugar and processed flour. Ie. On the farm, do you know what we did to fatten the livestock? Feed them grain. Today they are given steroids. Do you know what we eat to get fat? Grain: bread, cereal, pasta, rice, doughnuts, corn chip, taco chips, etc. grain.
 2. You don't have an anger problem you have patience problem.
 3. You don't have a rudeness problem you have a kindness problem.
 4. Look to honor others with your love, with Christ's love expressed through you.

F. Find Recipes for Loving Clean

1. Having identified your toxic behaviors begin replacing them with love and the fruit of the spirit. Christ-like behavior.
2. Read scripture looking for how a believer is to respond, act, and live. Wash yourself with the Word. *"to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word."* (Ephesians 5:26, NLT)
3. Enjoy the fruit of when your relationships thrive. It will make you want more life giving activity in your relationships.
4. Ask others to remind you when you are being toxic.
5. Read testimonies of how others overcame.
6. Spend time with those who are a part of thriving relationships. Hearing their story and how they are growing is positive input into you loving well.

Conclusion:

- Loving Clean is the ability to love others without bringing toxic tendencies into the relationship. It is the ability to love in a Christ like way that esteems, edifies, and encourages others. Loving clean is life giving. It brings life into the relationship.
- Jesus is the beginning of learning to Love Clean. He is the Champion of bringing relationships to life. *"Let continue to love because love is of God."* 1 Jn 4:7