

## Healing From Enmeshment & Emotional Incest

Today's podcast is about healing from enmeshment & emotional incest.

Children who grow up with enmeshed, emotionally incestuous parents face unique struggles that deeply affect their understanding of relationships. Enmeshment occurs when a parent's emotional needs are inappropriately placed on the child, forcing the child into a role they were never meant to fill. In other words, when a parent treats their child more like a romantic partner instead of their child. Enmeshed parents expect their child to be their emotional caregiver, making them happy when they are sad, comforting them after arguments with their spouse, or even protecting them from an abusive spouse. This sick dynamic teaches the child that their value lies in overachieving & people pleasing to an unhealthy degree. Over time, these distorted lessons shape how they approach relationships & their sense of self worth.

From an early age, children in such environments learn that their own needs & feelings must be set aside to keep the parent emotionally stable. As a result, they become hyper-vigilant, always striving to anticipate & meet the parent's emotional demands.

Proverbs 29:25 in the Amplified Bible warns, ***“The fear of human opinion brings a snare, but whoever trusts in & puts his confidence in the Lord will be exalted & safe.”*** When children grow up feeling responsible for managing the emotions of their parents, they often struggle to understand healthy boundaries. People pleasing often becomes their default behavior, & they may feel intense anxiety or guilt when they try to say no or prioritize their own well being.

This mindset carries into adulthood, where victim continue to believe their value is tied to relentless self sacrifice. They become overachievers at work, in relationships, or in ministry, constantly giving while feeling exhausted & unseen. The pressure to perform leaves them spiritually depleted, emotionally drained, & physically exhausted. Yet they push themselves harder, still trying to earn the love & acceptance they were taught was conditional.

The truth is, this is not God's design for His children! Jesus Himself invited the weary & burdened to find rest in Him. Matthew 11:28-29 says, ***“Come to Me, all who are weary & heavily burdened [by religious rituals that provide no peace], & I will give you rest [refreshing your souls with salvation]. Take My yoke upon you & learn from Me [following Me as My disciple], for I am gentle & humble in heart, & you will find rest [renewal, blessed quiet] for your souls.”***

Healing from the wounds of enmeshment requires learning to embrace healthy boundaries with everyone, especially emotionally incestuous parents. This begins by recognizing that love & acceptance are not things we must constantly strive to earn. God declares His unconditional love for us in Romans 8:38-39: ***“For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced—beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present & threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

You will need to set boundaries with your emotionally incestuous parent, & follow through with consequences when they do not respect your boundaries. Start with small efforts, such as being the first one to hang up the phone or rescheduling a visit. That will build your confidence to setting bigger boundaries, then bigger ones yet. Celebrate each time you set a healthy boundary, even if that celebration is simply telling yourself “Good job!” Doing so will help to give you the confidence you need to relate to your parent in a healthier way.

Learning to break free from people pleasing patterns takes time, patience, & self compassion. Seeking support can provide encouragement in this process. Most importantly, developing a deeper relationship with God helps victims find their true identity, one that is not based on achievement or pleasing others, but on being His beloved child.

If you have experienced enmeshment & still struggle with overachieving or people-pleasing, know that God sees your heart. He understands the wounds you have carried & longs to bring you healing. As you trust in Him, He will guide you toward a healthier, more joyful life.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!