

## Character Boost

Scripture used: [Genesis 3:1-8 \(NLT\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

In last week's message of the Detox series, Pastor Hurmon reminded us how we are created to connect vertically with God and horizontally with other people. Through the past year and a half, many of us have been looking inward in the face of this pandemic, leaving us feeling lonely. It is important to note that we are not alone in our loneliness. Last week's challenge was to reach out and learn how to relate to others, and to be sensitive to people who could be struggling with loneliness.

In today's passage, we ponder on the components essential to strengthening character. One way of defining character is, "the decisions we make when no one is looking." There is another term for this definition, integrity. Another aspect to character is the decisions we make when we are under pressure. This brings us to the passage in [Genesis 3:1-6a](#), where the serpent/Satan isolates Eve and puts her under pressure regarding what God said about eating fruit from the tree.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **It is dangerous to be emotionally, socially, or spiritually disconnected.** One of the ways we become disconnected is through getting lost in our head. This can happen when we overthink, become anxious or depressed, and choose to slowly drift away from others. One famous literary example of the harmful effects of disconnection comes from the novel "Crime and Punishment" by Fyodor Dostoevsky. The main character in this novel drifts away from his connections and becomes lost in his own head. He starts to think about killing one of his nemeses and eventually his view of the world is so distorted that he commits murder. One of the ways the author describes this main character is, "absorbed in himself and isolated from his fellows." One of the simplest things we can do to avoid becoming disconnected is to share our lives with friends, to tell people what is really going on in our lives whether good, bad, or difficult.
- 2) **Tell God, Tell A Friend. Be A Friend.** Be that person that creates a safe space for that child, spouse, elder, and/or friend to come to you and open up to you about how they're really doing. This safe space is a "no condemnation" space that allows people to be honest with how they are doing. In the same way, when we go to Jesus, [Romans 8:1](#) promises "there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus." This means that when we come to Jesus, we come to a space of grace. Emulate this space for the people in your life who need that welcoming and warm face. We need to train both our words and our "look," or body language, to be approachable, kind, and considerate. We should be mindful of our tone and the questions we ask.
- 3) **Don't return pain for pain.** Pastor Hurmon created a list of people who have disappointed him in some way. This list includes U.S Founding fathers who were slave owners, presidential heroes, his great aunt and uncle who shocked him as a teen in the way they argued, and Pastor Hurmon disappointing himself. In our modern day culture we are quick to write off people that don't fit our standards or who we don't see eye to eye with. In [Romans 3:10](#) the Scripture says "no one is righteous." That means there is no one is perfect or irredeemable, we all need grace - both from God and from others. Followers of Jesus should seek to be expressions of God's grace, mercy, and redeeming work in the world.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Are you an introvert or are you avoiding people intentionally? What are you hiding? Has this prolonged season of solitude during the pandemic caused you to stray away from connecting with others? When you feel yourself going down the rabbit hole, or you feel completely joyous, tell a friend.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Romans 8:1](#). Jesus offers a space for us that is a no condemnation space. How have you sought to offer a no condemnation space for your loved ones, friends, and community? What is hard about this? What is the relationship between offering a safe space and speaking truth or a corrective word? How can we change our approach, facial expressions, and posture so that the people in our lives can be safer being open with us?
- 3) **DO** - This week's response to the message, is "God, help me to tell a friend and be a friend offering support and help." Also consider "what area is fear dominating my life and dictating my actions?" Be sure to join us next week for the last message of the Detox series. Be blessed!