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Your Story Matters - Lesson 3 Notes

Remember Truthfully

Accurate language

“We routinely disqualify testimony that would plead for extenuation. That is, we are so persuaded of the rightness of our judgment as to invalidate evidence that does not confirm us in it. Nothing that deserves to be called truth could ever be arrived at by such means.”

Marilynne Robinson, *The Death of Adam*

Listen carefully, because I'll be asking questions about this story at the end of this session

“Ann Maree, what other man is speaking into your life?” I felt my stomach drop. Again.

I was sitting safely in my car, but those words (vocalized moments before in a meeting with my pastor) had the same impact in my memory as they did when they were spoken: astonishing, they left me stunned and speechless. I think my answer was really a question. I said, “besides my husband and our senior pastor on Sundays, you mean? Idunno.” My intention for meeting the pastor of shepherding that day was to discuss a case I was caring for and I wanted his advice. Instead, the conversation shifted to him counseling ME. I realized I was shaking my head back and forth as if by doing so I could jiggle the words from my memory. The pen in my hand shook as I tried to write word for word what he'd said that had bothered me so.

He actually said I needed *a man, another* man besides my husband speaking into my life.

He asked, “what does a relationship with your pastor look like?”

He tried to persuade me to let him counsel me despite my telling him I wasn't comfortable counseling with a man (my husband's direct report, no less).

He pressed me to tell him about the counsel I said I had from a different man that didn't go well.

I felt sick. I remember thinking “I will never meet with him alone ever again.” It wasn't that I thought my pastor had a hidden agenda for clandestine get togethers for, well, you know. Our



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conversation just felt off in a weird sort of way, one I wasn't immediately putting my finger on. I sat in my car mentally pouring through Scripture trying to remember where in God's word He talks about women submitting to the type of authority my pastor seemed to be suggesting. I didn't want to be insubmissive, but I couldn't think of a single verse. That's when I remembered the blog post by Mike Kruger I had read just that morning. I got out my phone and quickly googled it, then copied it word for word.

“Spiritual abuse, then, is when a spiritual leader—such as a pastor, elder, or head of a Christian organization—wields his position of spiritual authority in such a way that he manipulates, domineers, bullies, and intimidates those under him, as a means of accomplishing what he takes to be biblical and/or spiritual goals.

People who find themselves at odds with a spiritually abusive pastor, will often feel isolated, shamed, ostracized, silenced, and made to feel like they are unsubmissive, insubordinate, and one who undermines the church's God-given leadership.”

[Spiritual] “abuse usually happens because a pastor is desperately trying to control his situation.”

Mike Kruger, Spiritual Abuse series, Canon Foder, February 2021.

Watch Your Language

Naming Evil for what it is

Q. 151. What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?

¹A. Sins receive their aggravations,

¹ Jer. 2:8; Job 32:7, 9; Ecc. 4:13; 1 Kings 11:4, 9; 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Cor. 5:1; Jas. 4:17; Luke 12:47-48; Jer. 5:4-5; 2 Sam. 12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11-12; Rom. 2:17-24; Gal. 2:11-14; Matt. 21:38-39; 1 Sam. 2:25; Acts 5:4; Ps. 51:4; Rom. 2:4; Mal. 1:8, 14; Heb. 2:2-3; Heb. 12:25; Heb. 10:29; Matt. 12:31-32; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 6:4-6; Jude 1:8; Num. 12:8-9; Isa. 3:5; Prov. 30:17; 2 Cor. 12:15; Ps. 55:12-15; Zeph. 2:8, 10-11; Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 6:8; Rev. 17:6; 1 Cor. 8:11-12; Rom. 14:13, 15, 21; Ezek. 13:19; 1 Cor. 8:12; Rev. 18:12-13; Matt. 23:15; 1 Thess. 2:15-16; Josh. 22:20; Prov. 6:30-33; Ezra 9:10-12; 1 Kings 11:9-10; Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; Prov. 5:8-12; Prov. 6:32-33; Josh. 7:21; Jas. 1:14-15; Matt. 5:22; Mic. 2:1; Matt. 18:7; Rom. 2:23-24; Deut. 22:22, 28-29; Prov. 6:32-35; Matt. 11:21-24; John 15:22; Isa. 1:3; Deut. 32:6; Amos 4:8-11; Jer. 5:3; Rom. 1:26-27; Rom. 1:32; Dan. 5:22; Titus 3:10-11; Prov. 29:1; Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:17; Prov. 27:22; Prov. 23:35; Ps. 78:34-37; Jer. 2:20; Jer. 42:5-6, 20, 21; Ecc. 5:4-6; Prov. 20:25; Lev. 26:25; Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 17:18-19; Ps. 36:4; Jer. 6:16; Num. 15:30; Ex. 21:14; Jer. 3:3; Prov. 7:13; Ps. 52:1; 3 John 1:10; Num. 14:22; Zech. 7:11-12; Prov. 2:14; Isa. 57:17; Jer. 34:8-11; 2 Pet.

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1. From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others.
2. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them or any other, and the common good of all or many.
3. From the nature and quality of the offence: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but break forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, wilfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance.
4. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

1. God takes sin seriously, so should we

Persons who

older, know better
experienced, know better
given much grace
profession/education, know better
giftedness, know better
place of influence
office with influence
guide others
provide an example to others

If against

2:20-22; 2 Kings 5:26; Jer. 7:10; Isa. 26:10; Ezek. 23:37-39; Isa. 58:3-5; Num. 25:6-7; 1 Cor. 11:20-21; Jer. 7:8-10; Prov. 7:14-15; John 13:27, 30; Ezra 9:13-14; 2 Sam. 16:22; 1 Sam. 2:22-24.



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God (all sin is primarily against God)

his attributes

his Son

his grace

his holy spirit

his witness

his workings

against superiors

his saints

the weak

their souls

the common good of anyone

If the constitution of the offense is

against the express letter of the law

breaking a commandment

sin

conceived in the heart

in words and actions

scandalous

admit no reparation

against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private

admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows,

covenants, and engagements to God or men

If done

deliberately

wilfully

presumptuously

impudently

boastingly

maliciously

frequently

obstinately

with delight, continuance

or relapsing after repentance

if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these,



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if in public
in the presence of others

- a. Take any one of the aspects of your story (For instance,)
- b. Does it fit under any of those categories? Call it what it is.
- c. MANY times we work with people who have difficulty calling abuse abuse. Myself included. So we need to help put the right words to the experience.
 - i. Premiere episodes with Melissa Affolter and Darby Strickland

What about working with MEMORY though? Much can be said but,

2. Memory is a fickle thing
 - a. Remember like the Gospel writers rather than the Israelites

5 We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic, 6 but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at. (Num. 11:5-6)

- b. We're familiar with this story. The Israelites are complaining, dissatisfied with manna, and in their minds the most pungent memories take precedence over the reality of living as slaves (non human, no rights, no voice, no supplies ie straw, raped, beaten, threat of death). They remember

Fish

Cucumbers

Melons

Leeks

Onion



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Garlic

- c. The olfactory system is the only sensory apparatus connected directly to the limbic system, a collection of brain structures important for emotion, behavior, motivation, and memory/learning.
- d. Odors help us *relive* the memory
 - i. More than sight/sound (human body has two receptors for)
 - ii. More than touch (human body has four receptors for)
 - iii. Scent – human body has 350 receptors
- e. Odors
 - i. Cue the memory
 - ii. Race the heart
 - iii. A pleasant memory will help you breathe slower and more relaxed²

Vs the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) honest, objective (not particularly proudest moment) accounts

- 3. Consider yourself - the immediate and long-term impact, how you were hurt (again, specifically), what do you need in order to heal?
 - a. Consider the other person - what do they need to know, learn, repent of?

² The Time-Bending Magic of Smell – Richard Jerome



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- b. Resist assigning motivation or intent
4. We remember in two ways
- a. Passive - memories are stored and triggered without effort
 - b. Active - intentionally store what we want to remember (phone numbers, answers for tests, names, directions...)
 - c. Both shape us “What we remember often deeply affects what we do”
Volf, 68-69) “We don’t just remember suffered wrongs; we *use* our memories of them.”
 - i. Particularly *important* with memory of wrongs. Can go two ways (both can be true at the same time)
 - 1. Self
 - a. Remember to avoid
 - b. Remember to protect
 - c. Remember to restore well being
 - d. Remember to prepare (for future)
 - e. Remember to gain advantage (“I’ll never...”
like in my story)
 - f. Remember to nurse our wounds
 - 2. Others
 - a. Remember to exact revenge



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- b. Remember to forgive
- 5. Remembering truthfully is a just use of memory that constrains misuse (Volf, 71)
- 6. Remembering truthfully is important to healing
 - a. Sin is specific, naming sins against us *specifically* leads to the possibility of healing
 - b. We can't heal from what didn't happen

“We are not just shaped by memories; we ourselves shape the memories that shape us.” Miraslov

7. Poison

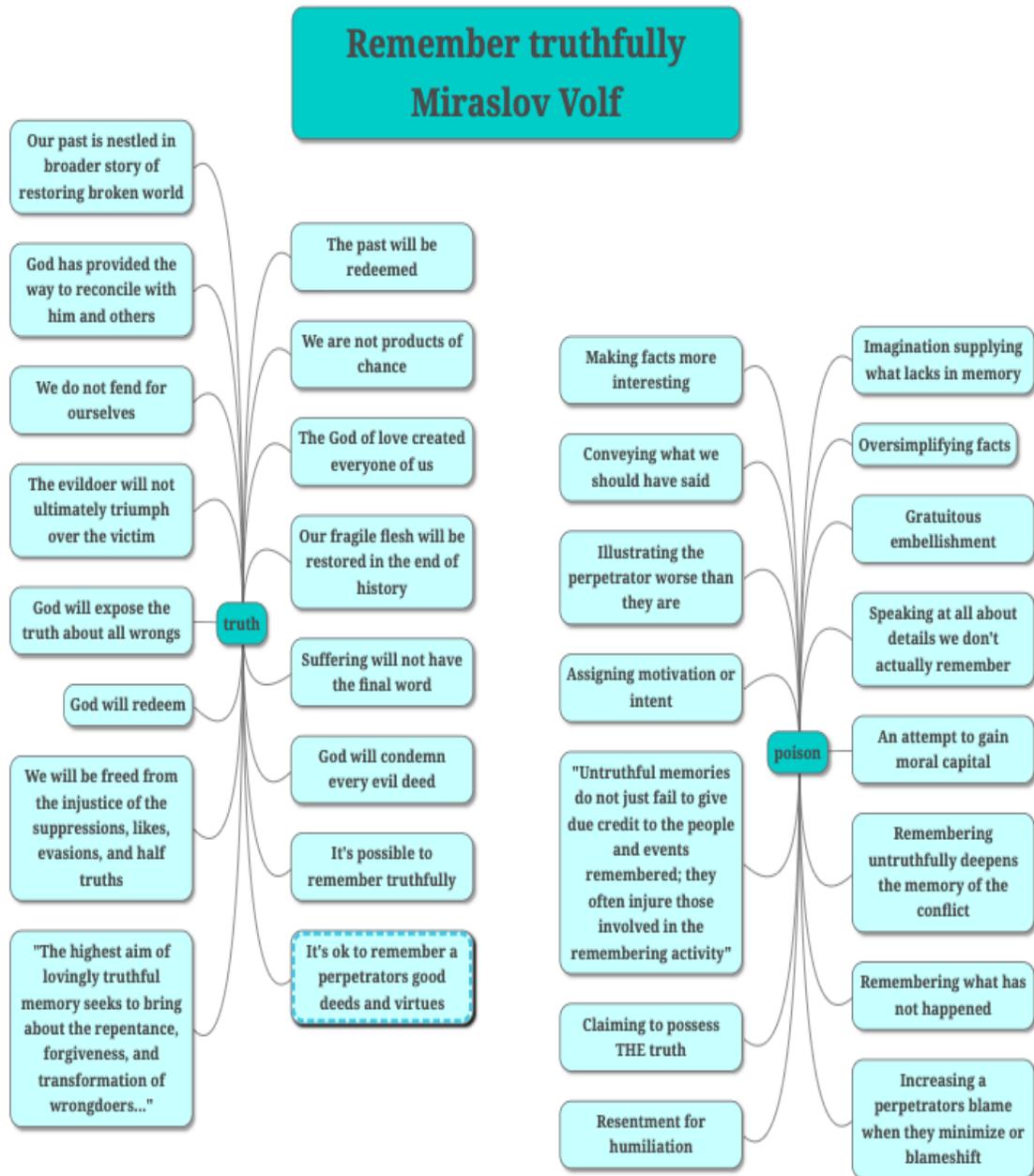
“To triumph fully, evil needs two victories, not one. The first victory happens when an evil deed is perpetrated; the second victory, when evil is returned. After the first victory, evil would die if the second victory did not infuse it with new life.”

Miraslov



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8. Miraslov = the more egregious the circumstances the more difficult in the remembering

What might cloud our memories? **DESNOS**

Disorder of extreme stress not otherwise specified

9. Complex PTSD
 - a. Chronic (prolonged) trauma as in prolonged child abuse or domestic abuse
 - b. Acute Stress Disorder
 - i. Happens within the first month, victim of rape
 - ii. difference from PTSD is length of time of symptoms
10. DESNOS
 - a. Histories of interpersonal victimization, multiple traumatic events, and/or traumatic exposure of extended duration.
 - b. Spanning years or even decades
 - c. Multiple events
 - i. Alcoholic parent
 - ii. Child of domestic abuse
 - iii. Sexually assaulted, abused (or even just objectified, used for another's pleasure whatever that meant)
 - iv. Even religious training (purity culture) minimizing personhood



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- v. Diminished as a human being
 - vi. Witnessed traumatic experience
 - d. Diagnostic = Response seems disproportionate to the event (for instance responding as if it was assault to sexual harassment)
 - e. Can be in combination of any of the above
11. Sheer enormity of wrong suffered overwhelms memory
12. EVEN if this has been someone's experience and perhaps "poison" is added to their story, we do NOT discount it. It was how they experienced their circumstances.

13. Disclaimer

This not a call to NOT remember (that's not possible) (ref Miraslov)

Be who(se) you are - As believers we are truth-tellers, confident in God's promises (vengeance, justice, love for you)

In Isa. 49:16 the prophet tells us - Look, I have inscribed *you* on the palms of my hands; (CSB)

Engraved,

Your person

Your image

Your "case"

Your circumstances (Eccl. 3:1-8)

Your sins



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Your temptations

Your weaknesses

Your wants

Your works

Everything about you

All that concerns you

- a. Situated firmly in his gifts (Eph. 1:4-17)

Verse	Gift
1.	1.3 Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places
2.	1.4 He chose us
3.	1.4 He made us holy and blameless before him
4.	1.5 He predestined us (also 1.11)
5.	1.5 He adopted us
6.	1.6 Blessed us in the beloved
7.	1.7 Redemption (in Him)
8.	1.7 Forgiveness for our trespasses
9.	1.7 Riches of his grace
10.	1.8 Lavished us
11.	1.9 Made known the mystery of his will
12.	1.10 United us



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13. 1.11 Gave us an inheritance
14. 1.12 Made us the praise of his glory
15. 1.13 Sealed us with the promised HS
16. 1.14 Guaranteed our inheritance
17. 1.17 Give a spirit of wisdom
18. 1.17 Give revelation of the knowledge of him
19. 1.18 Enlighten our eyes
20. 1.18 Know the hope to which we are called
21. 1.18 Know the riches of his glorious inheritance
22. 1.19 Know immeasurable greatness of his power toward us
23. 1.20 God worked in Christ for us, raised him from the dead, seated him at his right hand
24. 1.22 Put all things under Christ's feet
25. 1.22 Gave CHRIST as the head of the church
26. 2.4 Rich in mercy toward us
27. 2.4 Loved us
28. 2.5 Made us alive together in Christ
29. 2.5 Saved us by Grace
30. 2.6 Raised us up with Christ
31. 2.6 Seated us in the heavenly places in Christ



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- 32. 2.8 Salvation (Gift from God)
- 33. 2.10 Ability to do good works
- 34. 2.12 United to Christ
- 35. 2.12 Joined with Israel
- 36. 2.12 Familiar with the covenants of promise
- 37. 2.12 Have hope
- 38. 2.12 With God in this world
- 39. 2.13 Brought near
- 40. 2.14 Peace
- 41. 2.14 One with God
- 42. 2.14 Broken down dividing wall of hostility
- 43. 2.15 Abolished the law of commandments
- 44. 2.15 Created one new man in himself
- 45. 2.15 Made peace
- 46. 2.16 Reconciled us with God
- 47. 2.16 Killed hostility
- 48. 2.17 Sent son
- 49. 2.17 Preached peace
- 50. 2.18 Gave access to him
- 51. 2.19 Gave citizenship



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- 52. 2.19 Became family
- 53. 2.22 Became a dwelling place for God
- 54. 3.5 Revealed mystery
- 55. 3.6 Became fellow heirs
- 56. 3.6 Became members of one body
- 57. 3.6 Became partakers of the promise
- 58. 3.8 Recipients of the grace give to Paul to preach
- 59. 3.10 Manifold wisdom of God made know to
- 60. 3.11 Eternal purposes of Christ realized
- 61. 3.12 Boldness
- 62. 3.12 Confidence
- 63. 4.1 Called
- 64. 4.1 Ability to walk worthy
- 65. 4.2 Humility
- 66. 4.2 Gentleness
- 67. 4.2 Patience
- 68. 4.2 Ability to bear with one another in love
- 69. 4.3 Unity
- 70. 4.3 Bond of peace
- 71. 4.4 One body



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- 72. 4.4 One Spirit
- 73. 4.4 One hope
- 74. 4.5 One Lord
- 75. 4.5 One faith
- 76. 4.5 One baptism
- 77. 4.6 One God
- 78. 4.6 One Father
- 79. 4.6 Authority
- 80. 4.7 Grace (according to Christ's gift)
- 81. 4.8 Gifts
- 82. 4.11 Apostles
- 83. 4.11 Prophets
- 84. 4.11 Evangelists
- 85. 4.11 Shepherds
- 86. 4.11 Teachers
- 87. 4.13 Unity
- 88. 4.13 Knowledge of the Son
- 89. 4.13 Maturity
- 90. 4.13 Stature of the fullness Christ
- 91. 4.14 Maturity



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- 92. 4.15 Maturity
- 93. 4.16 Unity, growth, love

The Help[H]er

Questions about my story (to the best of my knowledge a true account)

1. What facts from my story might have been told “juicier”?
2. If I wanted to make myself sound better, what might I have included?
3. If I wanted to make the pastor look worse, what else could I have said?
4. Where could my imagination have gone?
5. What kind of details could I have added to substantiate any claims?