

day one

Over the last several weeks we've considered how the words, thoughts, and actions we store in our hearts are either good or evil. We've become aware of the behaviors, values, truths and people we've placed in our contempt box. Remember, anything or anyone we put into our contempt box no longer has the ability to be the blessing or source of good in our lives that God intended.

For some of us, becoming aware of contempt, reflecting on its role and function, and confessing how it's taken root in certain areas of our lives has been a huge surprise and challenge. We knew something wasn't right, but maybe for the first time we now know what to call it: Contempt. Our heads are still reeling from this truth we're discovering. Maybe we've taken a step back, listened, and watched as others began taking steps. And perhaps we're watching to see what happens to them before we decide to follow.

Think about the past few weeks. In light of the current teaching, where are you on your spiritual journey? Take comfort knowing we're all in this together. We've stored contempt in our hearts and placed people, values, truths and behaviors that God has given to us for healing and growth into the contempt box. If you're feeling overwhelmed, you're not alone.

READ JOHN 5:1-6. "Do you want to get well?" What kind of question is that? Think about it? Do you want to get rid of things in your contempt box? Are you at the point where you don't want to live like that any longer?

PRAY: Father, I've been trapped in this world of contempt for so long, it's hard to even imagine a different way to live. Open my heart to see the possibilities of a life lived above contempt.

day two

Living above contempt is possible, but living above contempt isn't accidental – one day we won't simply look up and realize "Wow! I no longer hold certain things or people in contempt!" Living above contempt comes about by awareness of patterns of storing contempt in our hearts and choosing new patterns.

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:17-20. "I declare to you this day that (storing contempt in your heart) will destroy you." [emphasis added] Think about what Paul asked during the message, "When I am filled with contempt, is that who I want to be?" Think about a key relationship in your life where contempt has been stored up. What would that relationship look like without contempt? Do you find yourself cherishing that contempt? Unwilling to get rid of it? Is there something about getting rid of it that scares you? Do you feel justified in your contempt? Imagine allowing contempt to continue to grow - what would that do to the relationship? What would that do to your own heart? Animals don't often allow themselves to be in uncertain or even dangerous situations except in the case of protecting offspring. Look again at today's passage and focus on the latter part of verse 19.

Holding on to and continuing to store up contempt in our hearts affects what kind of person we will be. Is that the kind of person I want my children to become?

PRAY: Father, help us to choose life. Help us to choose to live above contempt not only for ourselves but for those in our lives; for our children; and for those who come behind us desperately needing to see the power of the cross changing us.

day three

It's week 3 of our series on contempt and thankfully we're wrapping it up! I know I've got this contempt deal under control, how about you? In our world of drive-through fast food windows, high-speed internet, instant downloads and 1-minute makeovers, we may discover that the most difficult part of dealing with our contempt and choosing NOT to store up more contempt is just how slow the process may be. We call the process of taking steps to becoming a better person...

THE PATH OF HEALING AND WHOLENESS

AWARENESS – of contempt in our attitudes, feelings, thoughts, words, behaviors and relationships.

REFLECTION – on the fruit of contempt in our world and in our own lives

CONFESSION – to God, ourselves and to others

REJECTION – establishing patterns of not receiving or embracing contempt. We recognize it's a process and have gained awareness to recognize contempt as it disguises itself in various ways. We stand ready!

READ GALATIANS 6:9. Where are you on **THE PATH**? Who can/will you tell about your journey this week?

day four

Think about the black and white blocks Paul has used as visual reminders. The black blocks represent the contempt we choose to store up and the white blocks are the good things we store. Think of these blocks as seeds that grow into our thought processes, our words, our behaviors. From the good seeds sprout things like honesty, patience, and kindness. Conversely, cynicism, bitterness, and resentment begin to grow from the bad seeds. As we become aware of what's growing in our lives, the most common response is to take the garden shears and "snip off that contempt." Create another rule that will keep it from happening again.

So we're ready to rid our gardens of the weeds of contempt. But what will happen if we mow weeds? Realizing just how much contempt is in our culture, it's easy to imagine that our culture itself is the Miracle Grow that has those weeds growing "as fast as weeds!"

Imagine someone ready for battle, revving up the mower engine, speeding to one spot after another to mow down the weeds of contempt. All good gardeners know that before the weed sprouts above the soil, it sprouts roots underneath. Even with the most powerful mower and the sharpest "weed spotting system" in place, the roots [what's behind contempt], will continue to choke out the good seeds that are trying to grow underneath the ground.

READ MATTHEW 23:27.

Jesus isn't interested in us maintaining the appearance of a weed-free garden. He's not interested in our ability to spot weeds in everyone else's gardens either. Jesus calls us to begin the process of eliminating the contempt in our own hearts, roots and all.

*What weeds does God desire to pull in your life? Are you trying to convince Him that it's simply a surface weed and so there's no need to get under the dirt? What are **YOU** doing to eliminate the weeds? Have you shared with someone about where God is working in your life?*

TODAY: *Identify a time you've stored up an attitude, behavior or belief that leads to contempt. Imagine it as a black block in your hands. Ask yourself these questions:*

1. *Will this take me where I want to go?*
2. *Will this make me what I want to be?*
3. *Has the Rabbi Jesus allowed me to store this in my heart?*

d a y f i v e

"There is this incredibly attractive something about a person who knows who he/she is and has set aside contempt." Naive. Is that who you want to be?

READ MATTHEW 5:2-10. *Dare to imagine a life free of contempt.*

TODAY: *Identify **three** different times you've stored up an attitude, behavior or belief that leads to contempt. Imagine it as a black block in your hands. Ask yourself the three questions listed above.*

Remember we're cutting a new path. It will feel like work before it feels like home.

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• *Father, You have made me aware of the power of contempt*

• *in my world and in my life.*

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• *I have reflected on its devastating influence*

• *on society, my family and my own heart.*

• *I confess I have held Your principles,*

• *right behaviors and others in contempt.*

• *I have stored up contempt in my heart.*

• *I have even held You in contempt.*

• *I ask Your forgiveness and I ask You*

• *to free me from a heart of contempt.*

• *Teach me to be a good person*

• *from whom good things naturally flow.*

• *I pour contempt on all my pride*

• *and, following the example of my Rabbi - Jesus,*

• *I begin today a journey of laying down my contempt.*

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October 23/24, 2010



c o n t e m p t

NAIVE