



Lecture Notes for Audio Week 4

Principle 4: Detach with Love

Detachment has two parts: Live your life and let your loved ones live their lives. Let's look at what each of these principles involve.

Live Your Life

- Detachment is similar to differentiation or individuation, which are the processes whereby we are able to be connected to but separate from another person.
- Detachment is the opposite of enmeshment or codependency, which is the fusion of ourselves with another person where we are so dependent that we are unable to feel, be, choose, think, and act independently. We can be too involved and too connected to family members.
- God gave each of us stewardship over our lives, meaning we have the responsibility for how we live regardless of the choices others make (Matthew 25: The Parable of the Steward).
- Detachment is separating emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and sometimes physically from other people's choices and feelings.
- Detachment is stepping back from what is going on and choosing how you want to respond rather than reacting. This allows you to see the situation clearer. Jesus reminded us that we can choose how we respond to mistreatment (Matthew 5:38-42).
- Jesus reminded us we need to be wise and take the person's problems into consideration when we are dealing with them so we can respond appropriately and in a way that protects ourselves (Matthew 10:17). An angry person will get angry, a sensitive person will be sensitive, an addict will engage in the addiction, an abuser will be abusive, an irresponsible person will make bad choices, a dependent person will expect help, a negative person will be negative, a manipulative person will manipulate, and a controller will control. Expect it and don't be shocked, so you can plan your response ahead of time and not be thrown off balance. Recognizing that the person is just acting like they normally act will help you to detach.
- Detach from blame by not taking it on, if it isn't yours to take.
- Detach from anger by not arguing with an angry person and by not taking it personally. You can use short answers to get out of the argument quickly. Don't assume you made the person angry and don't always take angry words seriously.
- Detach from moods by recognizing that other people's moods are their own and you don't cause them. You can take care of yourself by not taking on their moods. You don't have to be sad, angry, hurt, or worried just because someone else is. You can be okay even if they aren't.

- Detach from guilt. Difficult people try to make you feel guilty by manipulation, playing victim or martyr, complaining, acting hurt, getting upset or angry with you, blaming you, or engaging in self-pity. Guilt can be so difficult to feel that it makes you give in to the person even when you resent the person for making you do it.
- Detach from threats by not reacting to them (unless they are real), but also don't allow yourself to be intimidated by them.
- Detach from crises by allowing the natural course to occur.
- Detach from other people who may disagree with your choices.
- Detach from personalities. Everyone has a personality and most of the time what people do is directly related to who they are and not related to who you are. When you remember not to take personalities personal (it's about them not you), it helps you to detach.
- Stop allowing yourself to get hooked by your difficult loved ones' manipulation, guilt, anger, blame, buttons, hot spots—anything that pulls you into reacting to them, taking care of them, taking on their “stuff”, and not taking care of yourself (Proverbs 22:24-25).
- Act as if: you act detached, before you feel detached. Your emotions will eventually follow your actions and you will be feeling and acting detached.

Let Your Loved Ones Live Their Lives

- Matthew 19:16-29 is a story about a rich young ruler who came to Jesus to ask him how he could have eternal life. Jesus told him and the man rejected Jesus' answer. How did Jesus respond? He let him go. He didn't run after him, beg him, explain it forty-five other ways, or tell him how foolish he was. He accepted the man's right to make his own choices.
- Jesus told his disciples to shake the dust off their feet if they were not welcomed in a town (Luke 10:5-12) and not to throw their pearls to pigs or to give to dogs what is sacred (Matthew 7:6).
- Your family members are separate people from you no matter what their relationship is to you and no matter how close and intertwined your lives are. You aren't responsible for them or for the choices they make. You aren't responsible for how they feel or what they do. You don't have to take care of them, you don't have to convince them to do what is “right” to do, and you don't have to rescue them. You can choose to do what you want to do and detach from the rest.
- Detachment also means you stop enabling and allow others to bear the consequences of their own choices (Galatians 6:7-8 explains the law of reaping and sowing). It is scary at first and you may suffer too, so it takes courage. God doesn't willingly bring affliction to men either, but allows it for their own good (Lamentations 3:33).

➤ LOVING DETACHMENT means you are kind, courteous, and respectful. You take care of your responsibilities in the relationship. You understand the reason your loved one is struggling, but don't let it be an excuse for doing what isn't okay. You have compassion without enabling. We are to treat our enemies well (Matthew 5:43-48) and not repay evil for evil, but respond with good (Romans 12:17-21). You respond with goodness and kindness, instead of treating them with anger, contempt, disrespect, and meanness, while at the same time taking care of yourself and letting others take responsibility for their own problems.

Summary of Detachment With Love

- Detachment could also be called “releasing with love.”
- Detachment is separating emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically from others' choices, reactions, and feelings.
- Detachment is not numbness, an absence of emotions, or denial.
- Detachment allows you to not react, so you can step back and see the situation clearly.
- You may have to act detached, before you feel detached.
- Detachment is taking control of your life by not letting others control your choices, feelings, and reactions. When you *react*, you let others dictate your actions, but when you *act* you choose your actions.
- Detachment is taking responsibility for your own life (including actions, inactions, feelings, and reactions).
- Detachment is allowing others the dignity to choose how to live their lives and take the responsibility for their choices.
- Detachment is not abandonment, disinterest, or indifference. You still treat the person with dignity, courtesy, and kindness while detaching.
- Detachment helps you to not take “personalities personal.”
- Detachment reminds you to mind your own business and that there are types of involvement that make the situation worse.
- Detachment is not getting in the middle (unless you choose to and know it is in your best interest and the best interest of others).
- Detachment sets you and the other person free.
- Detachment is letting go and letting God take care of the situation.
- Detachment can be summed up as “LIVE AND LET LIVE.”

