

Overcome Your Overwhelm

Friends, if we are going to find simplicity, we must pay attention to what's happening on the inside. It takes courage to slow down and be honest about where we are. So, at the risk of sounding cheesy, I want to say - I am so proud of you!

Now that you have identified your top Overwhelm Triggers, it's time to combat those triggers and find freedom. I have designed two tools to help you do just that:

- 1. Overcome Your Overwhelm Guide.** The following pages provide you with advice and practical next steps from the Word of God directly related to each Overwhelm Trigger: Insecurity, Blame, Isolation, and Self-Sufficiency.
- 2. Finding Simplicity Book.** *Finding Simplicity* walks through the Biblical book of James, helping you choose simplicity over complexity, exercise God's wisdom, and discover the joy in every day. Find out more at findingsimplicitybook.com.

God promises when we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us (James 4:8). What an amazing thought! When you look to God and focus on Him, you can be confident that He is present and ready to help you.

I would love to hear from you and know how God is working in your life to help you overcome overwhelm and find simplicity right where you are. My email is amber@amberparker.net.

Amber

P.S. If you are studying through *Finding Simplicity* with a group, I would love to offer you a discount on your order of five or more books. To set that up, just email me at amber@amberparker.net.

Overcoming Insecurity

Insecurity: *You struggle to make decisions or to feel confident about those decisions you do make. When you consider the future, you both fear what might come and believe there is something better out there to be experienced.*

Expressed through: *doubt, anxiety, fear, indecision, worry*

Combat Insecurity by Choosing Joy and Contentment. If we have a false idea that there is a perfect tomorrow, we will never be happy today. Our doubt and fear are often rooted in the belief that our circumstances can offer us security, happiness, or peace. When we learn to be content and trust God today, the unknown of the future loses its power.

The book of James opens with the surprising and seemingly impossible instruction to choose joy when we face trials (James 1:2). From this teaching, we understand that joy is possible every day. Instead of being based on circumstances or dependent on everything going correctly, God's offer is available right in the midst of our pain and struggles.

If you keep reading James chapter one, God invites us to ask Him for help. When we don't know how to navigate troubling circumstances, God generously and unequivocally offers us wisdom. But that wisdom comes with a warning not to doubt. Why? Because the person who doubts is insecure and unstable - like the waves on the ocean tossing back and forth. Doubt always robs us of joy.

When we find contentment today despite what we face, we then know we can find contentment tomorrow. Choosing joy frees us to confidently take steps of faith, knowing who we are and how we feel is not dependent on our circumstances.

Read the following Bible verses and write down your observations:

James 1:2-8

James 3:17

Luke 12:22-32

Philippians 4:8-13

Overcoming Blame

Blame: *When something goes wrong, you are always looking for the cause, but rarely do you consider the responsibility might lie with you. You believe you are a product of what has happened to you, and there is always someone else or something else that formed the person you are today.*

Expressed through: *anger, bitterness, sadness, avoidance, restlessness*

Combat Blame by Taking Ownership. Too often we rush through life without paying attention to what is going on in our souls. When we experience internal restlessness, pain, or bitterness, most of us tend to look outward for a solution. And we will never lack someone or something else to blame - our parents, our boss, our financial situation, our physical health, and the list can go on and on.

But the reality is, no matter what life has handed to us, ultimately, we alone are responsible for our choices and reactions. If we are angry, sad, restless, or any other emotion, that is a hundred percent on us.

James 1:13-16 addresses this issue directly. The negative thoughts and behaviors we display are not God's fault, and they are not other people's fault. Instead, they are a result of unhealthy patterns we have allowed to develop in our hearts and minds.

From Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden until today, men and women have been playing the blame game. But blame only complicates the situations and never brings healing. If we want freedom and peace, we have to be willing to look within our hearts and minds and take ownership of our choices.

Read the following Bible verses and write down your observations:

James 1:13-16

Genesis 3:6-13

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Matthew 7:1-5

Overcoming Isolation

Isolation: *While you may be surrounded by people, you lack authentic relationships and community. You rarely let your guard down and open up, even with God.*

Expressed through: *disconnection, loneliness, relational tension, distance from God*

Combat Isolation through Building Community. Isolation goes far beyond being alone. Some of the most social among us are lacking connection and meaningful interactions. While you and I were created for relationships, often, we exert extensive energy on building or defending barriers to protect us from other people. Unfortunately, relational tension builds upon relational tension. Instead of thriving and growing, many of our lives are marked by turmoil, hurt, and isolation.

James chapter five invites us to find healing through confessing our sins to each other. In other words, our personal growth and healing are connected to living in community. If we want to grow in our love for God, we need people to help us. If we're going to find freedom from our struggles, we need someone to walk with us. If we want to live out God's design fully, we need others to cheer us on.

Building community rarely happens overnight. Start with one or two people. Grab coffee or lunch. Talk a little. Listen a little. Allow the barriers to fall.

Isolation from people and God are interconnected. As we grow in our love for God, we will grow in our love for people. At the same time, as we develop authentic community with others, our relationship with God will deepen and grow.

Read the following Bible verses and write down your observations:

James 5:16

Hebrews 3:12-13

Colossians 3:12-15

1 John 2:7-11

Overcoming Self-Sufficiency

Self-sufficiency: *Deep down, you believe if you are going to get anywhere in life, it will be based solely on your efforts. While you might respect others, you struggle to trust them. You don't want to be dependent on anyone or anything, even God.*

Expressed through: *pride, disrespect, overworking, exhaustion, overlooking others*

Combat Self-Sufficiency by Cultivating Humility. Control is at the core of self-sufficiency. Our pride tells us that if we are going to succeed, we have to make it happen. While we may not verbalize it, we believe that God and other people will only let us down. This lack of trust places impossible pressure on us.

No matter how hard we work, we will always fall short. Plans will change, and situations outside of our control will occur. We will disappoint both ourselves and others. And even if we are successful at meeting our goals, our relationships suffer as a result.

James chapter four, warns us against boasting in our own plans and abilities. Instead of focusing on our desires, we are challenged to cultivate humility. Humility recognizes God is greater. We don't have it all together. Not only do we need God, but we also need other people. Each of us has gifts that we bring to the table, and each of us needs the contributions of others.

Instead of fighting with others, striving for perfection, or planning our lives away, we can choose to align with God and submit to His plans. Self-sufficiency positions us against God, while humility before Him invites His favor.

Read the following Bible verses and write down your observations:

James 4:1-16

Proverbs 16:18-19

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

I Corinthians 12:14-26