

This Week @ FLC's Newsletter: Spiritual Detox

A Message from Pastor Rohan Samuels

"As we step into a new year, I want to invite you into a sacred season of consecration, alignment, and spiritual renewal. From January 12th to January 31st, our church will enter a time we are calling Spiritual Detox, centered on the theme 'The Kingdom Blueprint.'

This season is about intentionally clearing space: spiritually, emotionally, and communally; so that we can hear God clearly and align our lives with His Kingdom purposes as we prepare for the vision ahead."

Book(s) of the Week

1. Slow Theology: Eight Practices for Resilient Faith in a Turbulent World (A Guide to Deep Faith in Our Busy Modern Lives) by A.J. Swoboda
2. Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers by Dane Ortlund
3. Analog Christian: Cultivating Contentment, Resilience, and Wisdom in the Digital Age by Jay Y. Kim

Words of Wisdom on Spiritual Detox

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term *detox* as "a regimen or treatment intended to remove toxins and impurities from the body." To detoxify means there is a process to remove poisonous or harmful qualities from something or someone. How, then, do we navigate the process of detoxifying our spiritual lives?

Susanna Wesley (mother of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism) penned a wise letter to her son John on how to best navigate the grey areas of life's many spiritual and formative quandaries.

"Would you judge the lawfulness of pleasure, take this rule:

Whatever weakens your reason,

Whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind,

Whatever impairs the tenderness of your conscience,

Whatever takes away your relish for things spiritual,

Whatever obscures your sense of God,

That is sin to you, no matter how innocent it may seem in itself.”

Spiritual detox requires our continued humility, an intentional relationship with, and an eager heart open to the sensitivities of the Holy Spirit of God. The rueful psalmist reminds us of God’s inescapable presence in Psalm 139, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.” God sees our many inconsistencies, or, as modern critics understand it, our spiritual *entanglements*. However, deciphering what harms our spiritual being versus what has been detrimental to our physical being has become increasingly difficult.

In the Gothic fiction novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, author Oscar Wilde pens the story of a beautiful young man who seeks eternal youth through an odd exchange. He commissions his friend to paint a picture of him and, whenever Dorian sins, the harm is expunged onto the painting, leaving him free of any blemish. Dorian lives a long life of salacious dealings, murder, betrayal, and hedonistic excursions, only to return to the painting one day to find it monstrously distorted. Dorian despises the painting so much that he stabs it, and in the process, every sin he ever committed since the painting’s commissioning then transfers to Dorian Gray. He falls dead to the floor, decrepit, feeble, and ugly. The painting, however, was then both spotless and beautiful, once more.

More often than not, that which intoxicates or poisons the soul is hidden from plain sight. Christian author Andrew Dyck wrote in his seminal book, *Your Future Self Will Thank You: Secrets to Self-Control from the Bible and Brain Science*, “Whenever you lose control, someone else always finds it.” And whenever we lose inventory of what affects, influences, or shapes our spiritual lives, we tend to retreat from that which can expose the consequences of the toxins that affect our spiritual well-being.

In 2026, we enter a formative season of **consecration** (willful devotion), **alignment** (course correction), and **spiritual renewal** (rededication to spiritual flourishing). We must be cognizant

of the many distractions that can stymie our devotion, divert our attention from the sacred to the profane, and distort our spiritual development. Spiritual toxins are not always sin or sinful, per se. They can present as habits that diminish your love for God's word; think of copious hours spent on social media. They can present as habits that strengthen the flesh at the expense of the soul; think of early morning or late night exercise activities that strengthen the body, but offer little to no time for prayer.

Spiritual toxins are not always objects of external influence alone. Recall that Jesus said, "It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart." (Mk. 7:15) There are influences constantly at work within us, battling for control over our decisions, our intentions, and our actions. In focusing too much on external factors, we tend to forget that more often than not, there are internal, unaddressed spiritual matters at play in derailing our spiritual health.

"Search me, God, and know my heart; put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there is any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." Ps. 139 (NASB)

This Week's Detox Call to Action

As we prepare for January 12th, I challenge you to take these three steps: Inspect your spiritual walls, audit your digital appetite, and inquire of the Lord regarding your current alignment. Let us not just move through the calendar, but move closer to the Heart of the Builder.

1. Practice "The Prayer of Examen" (gratitude, guidance, reflection, seeking forgiveness/healing, and looking ahead to the next day) each evening during the next 7 days. Review your day and ask: Where did I sense God's presence? Where did I resist His lead?
2. The Inventory Question: "Is there a 'good' thing in my life (career, fitness, hobby) that has moved from the 'frontier' to the 'center,' displacing the Lordship of Christ?"

"The God of heaven is the One who will grant us success." Nehemiah 2:20