

## THE SPIRITUAL DETOX (Week 1)

### Toxic Stereotypes

1. Do you enjoy going to the beach? When was the last time you did so? Have you ever been caught in a rip tide in the ocean?
2. Read Proverbs 13:20. What effects do the people you hang out with have on you? Do they encourage you in your spiritual growth? Or have more of a hindering influence? Or maybe something in between?
3. Ken explained three meanings of “world” used in the Bible. Two are positive in nature: 1) the created universe in all its beauty, and 2) humankind which is loved by God as his most priceless creation. What do you love and admire about these?
4. The darker usage of “world” in scripture is defined by John Mark Comer as “A system of ideas, values, morals, practices, and social norms that are integrated into the mainstream and eventually institutionalized in a culture corrupted by the twin sins of rebellion against God and the redefinition of good and evil.” What examples come to mind?
5. Read Romans 12:2. The JB Phillips version words it, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould.” In what ways have you felt the squeeze or are feeling it now?
6. Read 1 John 2:15-17. Here, God names what Ken’s illustration calls rip tides in the oceans of life and encourages us to swim toward God. Does this ocean illustration help you perceive your own predicaments in a different light?
7. Read John 17:14-21. John Mark Comer wrote: “A growing number of Christians are more loyal to their ideology or political party than they are to Jesus and his teachings. That takes us into territory outside the kingdom of God and demagnetizes our moral compass, pointing us in a direction that does not lead to life or peace. Followers of Jesus need to come back to the reality that baptism is their primary pledge of allegiance, contempt has zero place in the heart of those who claim to apprentice under Jesus, and the litmus test of our faith is the degree to which we love our enemy.” How does your own experience relate to this?
8. Read Matthew 6:10. God’s *kingdom* is described as a place that perfectly reflects his character and his values. Jesus came along to reveal that kingdom, saying “There is a much better way to live, watch me.” As a follower of Jesus, what do you love about the things he taught and modelled that are counter to today’s toxic stereotypes? Why?
9. What are toxic stereotypes? How can we survive them and instead bask in God’s love and reflect his light?
10. Read Matthew 16:24-25. Consider deeply Ken’s admonition: “Every follower of Jesus (including me) has to constantly ask ...in what ways have I been sucked into the culture...how have I let this world squeeze me into its mould...where have I drifted from my true identity and my real home? And also... How have I drifted from my God-ordained purpose to be a light in this world?” Read Proverbs 3:5-7.