

Aim: A look at how God's righteousness protects and saves

Resources to bring: A brain book or pictures and information about the brain;

Refer: Ephesians 6:17a, "Depression the Way Out" by Dr Neal Nedley

Read the first part of Ephesians 6:17 to find out what is the next piece of the armour of God.

Discuss: When do people use helmets?

Discuss: What is the purpose of a helmet? (The most common purpose of a helmet is to protect the brain)

Why is the brain important? (It controls the body)

List some ways you can think of that your brain may become injured.

- Drugs
- Physical injury (biking accidents, car accidents, falls etc)
- Brain damage from lack of oxygen (at birth, drowning, heart attack)
- Some diseases can cause brain damage

Look at a book or picture of the brain showing how different parts of the brain control different things

Read or give a summary of the story of Phineas Gage (Depression the Way Out page 175 or

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/phineas-gage-neurosciences-most-famous-patient-11390067/>)

(If you have access to the book "Depression the Way Out" read the section "Functions of the Frontal Lobe" page 180 and "Common Effects of Compromised Frontal Lobes on page 181-182)

The front part of your brain is very important because that is the part of your brain that listens to God.

Read the titles of the sections from page 183-186

("Frontal lobe health determines our character and quality of life. Depression is rooted in our frontal lobe. Weak willpower- the road to early suffering and premature death. Impaired frontal lobe causes impaired will. Impaired frontal lobe weakens the ability to plan. Injured frontal lobe causes violent behaviour.")

The effect of drugs on the brain:

From page 191, "Drugs other than illicit drugs can also impair frontal lobe function. Many feel cheated if they pay to see a doctor and do not walk away with at least one prescription for a medicinal drug... Caffeine and alcohol are culturally accepted drugs. Nicotine use is socially stigmatized but is still treated legally as a lifestyle choice and not the powerful addictive, mind-altering drug that it really is. Nonetheless, these agents take a toll on frontal brain function."

From page 192-195, "Caffeine unbalances the mind: caffeine upsets the delicate balance of nerve transmission in the brain... caffeine can significantly decrease frontal lobe blood flow... Excessive amounts of caffeine can cause severe brain problems, including seizures and sometimes even death!"

Do you know what happens when someone who is used to drinking coffee stops? They get a headache, they feel tired and grumpy for a couple of days. These are the withdrawal symptoms.

Protecting from physical injury:

Discuss: How you can protect your brain from physical injury.

Discuss why it is important to wear a bike helmet and have it fitted properly so that it covers the front of your brain. (As discussed earlier, this is the part that talks to God and that makes you, you.

Food for brain health:

Have you noticed that certain foods affect the way your brain works?

Page 196 says, that certain food chemicals found in cheeses, wines, fish, sausages and certain rich foods, especially in poultry and fish that is starting to spoil, reduce the blood flow to the brain. They can even cause nightmares and hallucinations.

Other things that affect your brain:

- **Hypnosis** puts the front part of your brain to sleep. Page 197
- **Lights:** Flashing, flickering and quickly changing lights can cause a type of hypnosis and put the front part of your brain to sleep. Including, certain TV programs, movies and disco lights.

What is the problem with this? – With the front part of your brain dozing, you don't think about the appropriateness of what you are watching and you may end up watching things that you would normally choose not to watch.

- **Sugar:** Just the other day (3/12/17) they had an item on the TV news about a study that found that eating a high-fat, high-sugar diet reprograms your brain so that it is harder for you to make good choices.
<https://coach.nine.com.au/2017/12/04/10/18/junk-food> Refined sugar reduces frontal lobe activity. Page 206
- **Sound:** Did you know that music also affects your brain function. Certain types of music, including what we would call rock music, and music with really unusual beat patterns also put the front part of your brain to sleep. Page 210
- **Music Videos:** Music video's can be very dangerous because they often combine flicker, flashing lights and fast changing scenes with rock music.
- **Negative thoughts** have a negative impact on your brain – this might seem unbelievable.

Have you ever thought about something scary and then found your heart was pounding, or you were sweating? This is an example of your thoughts affecting your body.

Have you ever noticed that when you are sick, you are more likely to feel sad or discouraged?

Do you know the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me?" – Proverbs 12:18^{NIV} says, "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Your thoughts affect your feelings and your health - at the same time, your feelings and health affect your thoughts. Next week we'll talk more about how the helmet of Salvation protects us from hurtful words and feelings, but for now the thing to learn is that you can use your words to affect your feelings.

When you are feeling bad, read Bible verses to help you think about good things. When you find yourself thinking something bad, change it into something good instead, and then after a while your feelings will start to change to, to match your new way of thinking.

Exercise, good nutrition, sunshine and water improve overall health, including brain health and increase the blood flow to all parts of your body, including your frontal lobe.

Information about drugs:

Junior Drug Awareness – Marijuana by Judy L Hasday & Therese DeAngelis

- Ch3 - What does Marijuana do to me:
- Adolescents are especially vulnerable because their minds bodies and spirits are still developing.
- Weakens immune system and mixes up the hormone system
- Affects all parts of the brain: changes personality, impairs ability to learn and remember
- Interferes with thinking, problem solving, decision making and concentrating
- Affects coordination, alertness and ability to perform even simple tasks (a lot worse than alcohol)
- Contains mind altering THC (a powerful hallucinogen) – cotenancy depends on the plant, marijuana in late 1990's was 20-80% stronger than in 1960/70
- User may feel more relaxed, time seems to go slow, and things seem more intense, emotions are exaggerated. About ½ hour later the person becomes drowsy and may fall asleep. Person may become extremely thirsty and hungry; eyes become red, blood pressure increases. Can also cause nausea, shaking and fainting.
- The body develops a tolerance – requires more to get the same response.
- Using over a long period may cause "Amotivation" syndrome where the user doesn't care about the future or the things they used to care about.
- Marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes are called a "Gate-way" drugs; users are more likely to go on to use other even more addictive, more dangerous drugs. 12-17yo who smokes is 19 more times more likely to use cocaine. Young person who drinks alcohol is 50 times more likely to use cocaine. 12-17 yo who smokes marijuana or pot is 85 more likely to use cocaine. Young person who drinks, smokes pot an cigarettes are 266 times more likely to use cocaine. The earlier in life they start the more likely they will move onto harder drugs.

Junior Drug Awareness – Alcohol by Nancy Peacock

- Mild toxin or poison
- Woman's bodies absorb more than men
- Alcohol slows eye focus and movement and impairs eye/hand coordination
- Causes brain damage – reduces blood flow: affects problem solving, memory
- Liver filters your blood, alcohol causes liver damage

Valium and other Downers – Cindy Dyson

- This includes some drugs prescribed to depression and pain, even over the counter pain relievers
- These drugs, even over the counter ones can be addictive
- These drugs, even over the counter ones have side effects
- Most of these drugs should only be used for short term
- These drugs work on the nerve system in the brain, then go to the liver where they are processed and excreted or stored in the fat cells of the body.
- If a person takes a second dose before the first dose leaves the body there is a possibility of overdosing.
- Regular users will develop a tolerance and need more, or a more potent drug to get the same relief
- Using alcohol with drugs (even over the counter) or using more than one drug at a time can increase the effects of the drugs and the risk of overdosing and even death.
- Some examples of drugs:
 - Benzodiazepines -(Valium, Xanax. Librium, Itivan) – relax the body
 - Barbiturates (another family of drugs)

Same Dress Different Day by Juliet Van Heereen

- Cocaine changes the pathways in the frontal lobe and destroys the ability of the body to make dopamine and endorphins which the body needs to have good feelings.
- Cocaine remains in the body for up to 3 years