

comfort detox journal

21 comfort cleanses



Welcome!

If you had to rate your level of comfort today on a scale of 1 to 10, what number would you choose? Maybe you are in a difficult season, so you would choose a number closer to 1. Or perhaps life is rolling along rather smoothly right now, so you would choose a number closer to 10.

Wherever you find yourself on the comfort meter today, the truth is we all are in desperate need of a comfort that transcends our circumstances and truly transforms us, heart and soul. We need true comfort—the kind that flows like a mighty river from God himself.

That's why our need for comfort is not the trouble. Our desire for it is woven into the very fabric of our being by our Creator so that we might turn to all that he is for us in Christ Jesus.

The real trouble is that we aren't going to God for the comfort we need. Comfort substitutes abound, clamoring for our attention. How easy it is to turn to lesser things! These pseudocomforts may satisfy for a moment, but our hearts were made to function on something greater. Until we find our comfort in God, all life's pleasures will eventually return void.

Our hearts desperately need a detox to clear the way for the pure comfort that comes from God. This journal is designed for that purpose. It pulls the Comfort Cleanse activities from each chapter of my book *Comfort Detox: Finding Freedom from Habits that Bind You*. Each cleanse has space for you to process the concepts by journaling or drawing; be creative! You'll also notice each page has a patterned edge begging to be filled. Coloring is a great way to be still in God's presence and listen for his voice.

As you work through these 21 Comfort Cleanses, may the God of all comfort meet your every need and prove that he is ready and willing to soothe your soul in every season.

Erin



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Using the Book and Journal

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At the end of each chapter in *Comfort Detox* is a section called Comfort Cleanse. These application exercises and reflection questions are designed to help you process the ideas in the book. The intention is that you would read the chapter, then work through the activities in the days that follow.

Everything you need to process these exercises is included in the book—except space to write out your thoughts, struggles, and personal progress. This journal is the solution! Each Comfort Cleanse is listed here, along with space to doodle, color, and write notes about what you are learning.

As mentioned in the book, the activities are provided in sequential order (1 to 21), but you may process them in tandem or even out of order, depending on what God is teaching you specifically. Think of this as an activity guide rather than a numbered to-do list.

Comfort Cleanse: Alone or in a Group?

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You can work through these 21 Comfort Cleanses on your own or with a group. If you are embarking on this journey alone, I recommend finding at least one other person you can go the way with. There is great value in having a kindred heart with whom to share your struggles, confess your sins, and receive prayer and encouragement.

If you are reading *Comfort Detox* and using the journal in your small group, be sure to clarify the number of chapters and activities to complete before each meeting. Even so, this comfort cleanse is a journey not a task list, so be flexible if some friends are taking a slower pace. As long as progress is evident, keep going the way together.

Whether you are completing the 21 Comfort Cleanses on your own or with friends, share what you are doing with your wider circle online. Check out the shareable graphics at erinstraza.com/comfort-detox.

comfort cleanse #1

gathering your people

Eugene Peterson points out that in the Bible people of faith are referred to as disciples and pilgrims. Neither is in the singular form, which points to the necessity of living in community. The people we spend time with are the ones who hold much sway over how we live day to day. Your comfort detox journey will be much more effective if you go the way with others!

I recommend that you:

- Find a few friends who will commit to the process with you, and write down all of your names.
- Decide how you will read the book and complete the Comfort Cleanse activities; specifically state how many pages or chapters you will read each week.
- Make a plan for discussing what you are learning; it could be a daily text check in, a once-a-week meeting, or a once-a-month gathering.
- Share your desire for taking this comfort detox journey and any concerns you have as you begin.

“We need to retrain our brains, our hearts, and our wills to seek a comfort that truly satisfies.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #2

embracing reality

It's one thing to hear about the discomfort others experience. It's another thing to see it with your own eyes. Seeing firsthand forces you to deal with reality—to deal with the normal that is not your own. How can you embrace the reality of the world's normal at the start of your detox journey? Here are a few ideas to consider; pick one of these or create your own to complete in the next week. Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox for suggested reading and resources.

1. Learn about one of the following:

- the oppression of women and girls
- systemic poverty
- genocide
- racism

2. Then, arrange a hands-on experience:

- serve at a homeless shelter
- visit a nursing home
- talk with a refugee
- help a single parent for a few hours

Journal or
Draw

“By extending
love and comfort
to the broken
places around
us, we keep
watch with Jesus
in his sorrow.”

comfort cleanse #3

a shredding

Block out thirty minutes when you can be alone without interruption. Ask God to begin shredding your heart for the brokenness of the world. Confess the ways you have avoided facing the reality of brokenness and suffering that sent Jesus to the cross. Ask God to teach you how to keep watch with him for those who are suffering.

Consider drawing your heart or writing out your prayer.

“It takes fresh experiences, surroundings, and inputs for us to see familiar shadows in a new light.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #4

detoxing from convenience

Pick a day this week to disrupt your cue-routine-reward habit loop for convenience. In the morning, ask God to alert you to how you are insisting that life adhere to your plan. Whenever inconveniences pop up, embrace them and ask God to help you say no to self instead. Write down what happened and what you learned.

“There is a sense, a pressure, that we should *do* something big, and that pressure can squeeze the joy out of walking with Jesus.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #5

detoxing from safety

Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to take the Risk-Taking Test from PsychTests.com. Process your results by working through the following questions:

- As you answered the questions, did you discover anything new about how willing you are to embrace risk?
- Based on the quiz questions, does it seem that your risk aversion is masked as common sense?
- How does having your decision matrix set to safety cause you to dismiss opportunities God may be calling you to embrace?

Ask God to show you where you have become content to stay encamped in the wilderness rather than moving forward in faith to the Promised Land. Is it a relationship? A job? A character flaw? A step of faith? How can you choose to live for more than safety in this area of your life?

Journal or
Draw

“What if our
common sense
has been
negatively
influenced by
our addiction
to comfort?”

comfort cleanse #6

detoxing from perfection

Amy Carroll, author of the book *Breaking Up with Perfect*, has an insightful interview about cutting perfectionistic ties. Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to listen to the interview. Process the power perfection has on you by working through these questions:

- When is the lure of perfection the strongest for you?
- What appeals to you about having a life that others envy?
- What do you lose by trying to project a perfect life?

Identify the main area in which perfection is ruling you. Ask God to help you say goodbye to perfectionistic thinking in that area this week, and write down what happens.

Journal or
Draw

“Convenience,
safety, perfection—
these are daily
habits built by
choice; and
they will have to
be undone the
same way, choice
by choice.”

comfort cleanse #7

detoxing from acedia

Spiritual apathy causes us to simply not care about others. In relation to comfort addiction, acedia is the way that we detach so that we do not have to get our hearts involved in the trials of others.

- When are you most tempted to play it safe with your heart and refuse to love?
- When are you most tempted to disengage from the pain of others and the world?

Journal or
Draw

“Those very habits promoting emotional distance keep us from experiencing the love we so desperately long for and the love we are meant to give away.”

comfort cleanse #8

==== detoxing from the savior complex

The weight of the world stirs in us the desire to set things right. But when the needs outweigh our abilities, we pull away and detach. Our need to save others actually prevents us from giving what we can: our care.

- How bad is your savior complex? Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to take the savior complex quiz from *Revival Magazine*.
- What are you learning from evaluating your own savior complex?
- Ask God to show you how the savior complex is affecting your relationships.

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Journal or
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Draw
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“Our hearts are emotional muscles, requiring regular use for optimum functioning.”

comfort cleanse #9

===== detoxing from scarcity mentality

Comfort addiction fools us into depending on our scant reserves when we have the riches of God available in Jesus. Scarcity mentality prompts us to hoard what we have instead of freely giving to those in need.

Ask God to show you hidden pockets of scarcity mentality that are ruling your thoughts and decisions as you process these questions:

- When are you most tempted to recoil from the needs of others because you feel deficient?
- Why is it difficult for you to trust God to meet your needs?
- How does scarcity mentality affect your everyday decisions and relationships?

“Scarcity mentality measures out life by the ounce; it always concludes that the needs outweigh the resources.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #10

detoxing from the american dream

Find out how wealthy you are compared to the rest of the world. Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to see your place on the Global Rich List. Be sure to scroll down to read the complete results!

- Did your results surprise you? If you were to consider yourself wealthy, how might that change the way you extend comfort to those who have less?
- In what ways has the American dream pulled you into a lifestyle that is geared toward improving your own comfort (status, wealth, possessions, etc.)?
- Ask God to show you one thing to adjust in your life to break your comfort habit in this area.

Note: I am in no way endorsing CARE International or asking you to donate to their work.

Journal or
Draw

"The system tells us happiness increases as our creature comforts grow."

comfort cleanse #11

detoxing from over-reaping

Make a list of your typical week's events and commitments. Estimate the time spent on average for each one (your time should add up to 168 hours). A few entries are provided as an example.

Then identify the primary beneficiary for each entry; be as general or specific as you wish. Process with the following questions:

- Do you see any ways that you are overinvesting in yourself?
- How has self-improvement pulled you into a lifestyle that is geared toward improving your own comfort (intellect, experiences, beauty, etc.)?
- In what ways are you over-reaping the harvest of blessing God has poured out on you?

Activity	Hours per Week	Beneficiary
sleeping		
personal care		
exercise		
work		
eating and food prep		
quiet time		
small group		
gardening		
reading		
school		

"The abundant life Jesus spoke of isn't opposed to the material, but it consists of more than *just* the material."

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #12

fashion a desert

Find a time in the next few days to create your own desert. Carve out an hour (or two or three!) of quiet where you can purposely spend time getting to know our Comforter. Take your Bible and a journal (if you use one), but no electronics. (If you need a timer, find a watch or a clock— or set your phone timer and leave it in the next room where you won't be tempted to access it.)

Read John 14 and work through the following exercises:

- Ask God to reveal the Spirit to you as Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, and Standby.
- Praise the Father for sending the Spirit to comfort you. Confess the ways you have failed to receive this gift.
- Claim your dependence on the Comforter in learning and remembering truth and experiencing the comfort your heart craves.

Journal or
Draw

"I have pursued
the comfort of
things, when all
along Comfort
is a Person."

comfort cleanse #13

the full story

Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to watch the TED Talk by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie titled “The Danger of a Single Story.”

- What did you learn about the danger a single story can have for our opinions and views?
- How has the single story you’ve heard about comfort shaped your desire for and pursuit of comfort?

Journal or

Draw

“What a relief that
God has redeemed
us for more than
self-centered
living!”

comfort cleanse #14

comfort inventory

Sit with God and ask the Comforter to remind you of all the ways his comfort has gone into your scorched places. Write down what you are reminded of and ask God to show you how you can pass this comfort on to someone else in need.

“Comfort is actually multiplied in the giving and reduced in the keeping.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #15

practicing compassion

Choose a day. Today, even. Ask God for a divine appointment in which you can practice compassion toward someone in need of his comfort and compassion. Keep this journal handy and record how your day unfolds.

Journal or
Draw

“Learning
the new habit
of compassion
disrupts the bent
we all have
toward serving
our own
preferences
and taking the
path of least
resistance.”

comfort cleanse #16

practicing trust

Take time today to sit quietly with God and ask him to reveal his heart toward you. Note the words, phrases, or Scriptures that come to mind. Meditate on these words daily for the next week. Imagine what difference it would make in your life if you trusted God's heart, and ask God to make that truth real to you so you can make it real to others.

Journal or
Draw

“Practicing trust means that I have to confront my doubt that God’s promises are true—regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the lack of security I may feel.”

comfort cleanse #17

practicing humility

Spend time with the Lord mulling over your place as the creature and God's place as Creator. Ask God to strengthen your dependence on him for comfort so that you can be humble toward others in need. Invest in authentic friendships that allow you to practice being the real you in every situation.

Consider writing a prayer.

"Humility allows us
to lower our shields
and risk being
less than perfect
so we can be
something more
worthwhile: real."

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #18

practicing engagement

Visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to listen to the song “Come Close Now” by Christa Wells.

Whose fire of sorrow can you be near to this week?

“Wounds
connect us to
one another in
the human
experience.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #19

practicing abundance

Find fifteen to twenty minutes and a quiet spot. Grab some colored pens and pencils. Ask the Comforter to remind you of the riches of your inheritance in Christ—all that you have access to because of Jesus. Below, write down the words and phrases that come to mind, filling the page with words in a variety of colors, letter styles, and sizes. Meditate on God’s abundance promised to you.

Journal or
Draw

“Am I willing to stand in faith, engaged in the brokenness that is shredding the world, and proclaim that God is still God, even when life doesn’t change and hurts refuse to heal?”

comfort cleanse #20

practicing true citizenship

Your true citizenship comes with glorious benefits! To help you ponder the beauty of your heavenly citizenship, visit erinstraza.com/comfort-detox and follow the link to watch the three-minute video “From Being Undocumented to Becoming a U.S. Citizen.” Process your thoughts about citizenship and write some thoughts here.

“A new kingdom.

A new identity.

A new purpose.

These benefits are bestowed on every citizen of heaven.”

Journal or
Draw

comfort cleanse #21

practicing influence

Below, make a list of the places of influence God has entrusted to your management and care. Include anything connected to your home, family, work, community, interests, and so on. Ask God to show you how you can use these places for the benefit of others, and choose one action step you can take in the next month.

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Journal or
.....
Draw
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“There is too much
to do and too
much brokenness
in this world for
any of God’s
people to sit idle,
amused by life
pursuits that
benefit only
ourselves.”

Closing words from Erin

As you close the cover on *Comfort Detox*, may you go forward in hope, trusting that God is working and moving with every small victory. May you have joy in all that God is doing. May you be free from the guilt that you aren't being perfect at being uncomfortable for the sake of the gospel. My friend Laura taught me this powerful truth over a cup of coffee one day when I was feeling especially unsure about *Comfort Detox* and its message. I needed to hear it, and I'm guessing you do too. Jesus already did that for us, you know. He made himself nothing to comfort us in our sin by breaking its power and claim over us. He came down from heaven, put on our broken flesh, endured persecution, died on a cross, and conquered death and hell. I'd say he was uncomfortable enough for us all. We cannot add to his work, but we can commune with him in our choices to embrace all he bought for us. He made a way for us to experience true comfort. It would be a sad waste not to enjoy it.

May you become the agents of comfort God intends you to be.

Order *Comfort Detox* at
www.ivpress.com/comfortdetox

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