

Finding Freedom - Devotional

Week 4 - #1

While there are a lot of situations where someone truly behaves in a very hurtful manner, I find that far too often, people get tripped up by “perceived rejection”. As I shared on Saturday, in the case of perceived rejection, we don’t get hurt by someone who is really “behaving badly”. We get hurt by someone whose actions don’t measure up to the way we expect to be treated. For example, a good friend says, “I’ll call you back.” When they don’t call back, you get all bent out of shape! That’s perceived rejection. There was no malice or bad intent involved.

A good example of perceived rejection in the Bible is when King Saul gets offended after hearing the women sing about him and David. Take a moment right now and reread that story in 1 Samuel 18:6-13.

Notice carefully, the women were singing, “Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.” Now if the ladies had been chanting in unison, “Saul sucks as a king! We want David!”, I could see Saul getting hurt and upset. That type of behavior would clearly evoke rejection (feeling unloved and unwanted) in anyone. However, that wasn’t the case. This was a joyous occasion where the people were celebrating the victories of two great men of Israel. Take a look back at verses 6 and 7. What do you think the people thought of Saul?

I don’t believe anyone there intended to harm Saul. They were including him in the celebration! Fundamentally, it is Saul’s self-rejection and fear of rejection that twisted his perception of this situation so he comes to the worst possible conclusion. Our self-rejection and fear of rejection does the same thing in our lives today!

Imagine for a moment that Saul was really secure in His identify. Picture Saul as man who really knew God loved him and that his worth as man wasn’t tied up in other people’s opinions or his position. How might have Saul reacted differently when he heard the women singing?

The power of this simple exercise is being able to see another response to the same set of circumstances. A response fueled by love and peace and not fear and rejection. How great of a relationship could Saul and David have had? Love unites. Fear and rejection divide.

Much like Saul, we tend not to take every thought captive like the Bible instructs us to do in 2 Corinthians 10:5, but we let our fears and our rejection lead us down a path to total destruction. Ask the Lord to show you a time when you got tripped up by perceived rejection.

There are a few keys to praying through these types of situations. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify the expectations that you were holding this other person to. _____

Underneath that expectation is likely a lie about yourself. That lie could be something like, “I’m unloveable” or “I’m worthless”. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify the lie about yourself.

Now, ask God to reveal the Truth you need to begin to believe and declare about yourself to keep from getting tripped up by a similar situation in the future. _____

Take all of this revelation into a Finding Freedom prayer session and get grounded a little deeper in all the love your Heavenly Father has for you!!

Finding Freedom - Devotional

Week 4 - #2

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10

How is your self-image? Do you see yourself as a masterpiece or do you see yourself as something that might be found on the sale rack...or worse, in the trash? God's deep desire is that we come to fully love ourselves and see ourselves in the light of His love.

So, check this out, the definition of masterpiece from the dictionary is: the most outstanding work of a creative artist or craftsman. Wow! Can you wrap your mind around the fact that your Heavenly Father sees you as an *outstanding work*? Most people I know, including myself, find it a challenge to really embrace the truth of this verse. So, let's work on that.

I want you to rewrite Ephesians 2:10, but I want you to make a few changes. It's OK, I'm not trying to alter scripture! I just want you to adjust this verse to make it a personalized declaration. To do this, you simply need to change "we are" to "I am", "us" to "me", and "we" to "I". _____

Now, I want you to read this declaration out loud, not just once, but repeat it 3 times!

So, how did that feel? Was it a little awkward? Did you feel like you 'owned' the words you were saying, or did they feel sorta empty and not filled with meaning and life? Just notice how you were feeling when you declared these words. Take a few minutes and prayerfully ponder the incredible Truth of Eph. 2:10. Write down what you feel the Holy Spirit is saying to you.

All of us have beliefs about ourselves which are not fully aligned with the way our Heavenly Father thinks and speaks about us. Beliefs regarding our identify can often be identified by completing the phrase: I am _____. Whether they are positive, God-breathed words of Truth, or negative, devaluing lies from the kingdom of darkness, our identity can mostly be expressed in these simple phrases. Some of you know exactly where this is going. Yup, take a moment right now to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the lie, or lies, which are contending with you believing that you are His masterpiece. _____

You can begin to experience more of your Heavenly Identify by simply starting to take a stand against the lies you have believed about yourself. Renouncing these devaluing words which have eroded your self-worth, and declaring God's Truths which contradict the lies, is a great way to start! However, if you want to go a little deeper, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a situation or event that was as an "entry point" for the lies He has revealed. If you choose to take that challenge on, you might want to grab a ministry time handout to help you flush out all the stuff you'll need to pray through.

Once you've wrapped up your praying, go back and reread the personalized Ephesians 2:10 declaration you wrote. Notice how it feels reading these words now. I'll bet you are feeling either a little, or a lot, more like you really 'own' these words of Truth!

Finding Freedom - Devotional

Week 4 - #3

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

Our heavenly Father's deep desire is that we get to a place where the Truths of His love stations us in our Heavenly Identify. To start off today's devotional, I want you to read the following statements out loud:

I am chosen, I belong
I am gifted and special
I am pleasing to God

I am loved and treasured
I am significant
I am forgiven

The above statements are just a few foundational beliefs which can help you establish a more robust heavenly Identity. These statements must become more than just encouraging words. They must become truths which are written on your heart that you live from each and every day. When they are, you will be well on your way to being anchored in your Father's love.

Which one of these statements felt a little more difficult or awkward to declare than the others? Take a moment right now and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the lie that you believe which contends with that statement. _____

Go ahead and the renounce the lie you've written down and declare the Truth. If you feel this is an area where you need to stop and do some more focused prayer, take the time you need!

As we grow in knowing our Heavenly Identify, what begins to happen is that the Truths of God actually begin to establish, or weigh, our worth. The challenge is that all of us have spent years living life allowing the words and actions of the people around us to "weigh our worth". When the words of others were uplifting and loving, our soul would soar, and when the words and actions of others were hurtful and devaluing, our sense of worth would plummet into a dark abyss. This is a pattern that needs to be broken!

I wish I could tell you that breaking this pattern of letting other people weigh your worth was going to be a "one prayer wonder", but as you become conscious of your pattern, you can begin to take a prayer posture against it! You'll need to be patient, realizing that for so many years of your life, the only source of love you had was from the people around you. Learning to really allow your Heavenly Father to weigh your worth is a huge change! Let me lead you in a prayer that can begin helping you down this rewarding pathway.

Before you pray this prayer, read it silently at least once. Let your heart begin to grasp the meaning and intent of the words. After that, come before your Heavenly Father and declare this prayer to Him. Take your time and allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any other revelation you need to begin contending against this pattern in your life.

Dear Heavenly Father, please forgive me for allowing the actions and words of other people to weigh my worth. Lord, forgive me for seeking, coveting, and desiring love from other people, more than love from you. Father, I confess that I have allowed the hurtful words and actions of others to shape my self-image more than your loving words of Truth. Forgive me for giving away my authority and my God-given identify. I ask today that you break, shatter and destroy this pattern in my life! Your word says that You are the author and perfecter of my faith. I choose today your Truths over all the lies I have believed. Let your perfect love break and cast out the fear of man in Jesus mighty name. You are my God in whom I believe and trust!

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Week 4 - #4

Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.
3 John 1:2

As I sit here this morning and write this final devotional, I have tears in my eyes as I think of you. I feel the pleasure of our heavenly Father rest upon me, because you have set yourself apart and made caring for your soul a priority in your life. I believe you have witnessed during the course of the last four weeks, how important and fulfilling it is to come into alignment with our Fathers desire to restore our soul.

Read out loud the scripture from 3 John 1:2 at the top of the page. This is the cry of my heart for you. I see so many people in this world, and even in the church, who are seeking and chasing after many different things, but the true prosperity of the gospel is a restored soul. Make that an ongoing priority in your life. Finding Freedom is not just a class, it's a way of life.

I implore you to make spending time with your Father a top priority in your life. In your times with God, continue to grow in the discipline of being a more introspective person, and put into practice the incredible gift of calling on the council of the Holy Spirit. As He reveals to you the issues of your heart, hold fast to the practice of **confessing** your sins, **renouncing** lies about yourself, God and others, **forgiving** others for their sins against you, **rebuking** demonic spirits, and **declaring** the Truths which will set your soul free!

The Apostle Paul penned some beautiful words in Philippians 2:12-18 which reflects my heart for you in this moment. Read the following and imagine it's me saying these words to you:

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Shine! Shine brightly! You are amazing and incredible sons and daughters of the Most High God! Let Paul's words encourage you to press on and find more freedom each and every day! I just want to pray over you to close out this time together.

Heavenly Father, right now, I thank you for the time I have been able to spend with your sons and daughters. I pray that you would continue to draw them near to your heart. Let their ears be open to the sweet Truths that you desire to speak to their hearts. Fill them with your love and peace right now! Release a flow of your pure unconditional love from the courts of heaven straight to their hearts. Holy Spirit, continue to flood them with wisdom and council which will guide them in their every day pursuits of You, their calling and Your Kingdom. May they prosper, as their soul prospers! Amen