

GOD'S E.R.

FREED FROM ALL THINGS

Acts 13:39 *and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things*

Class 1 – Protecting Your Freedoms - Lesson Seven

LOVE YOURSELF

Too often we find Christians are out of balance - we either love ourselves to the point where we have forgotten about everyone else, or we despise ourselves to the point of abuse. Neither is the correct posture that the Lord wants us to have. Actually, He wants us to love ourselves and each other with the love He has given us:

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

One another *Gr. – themselves, together, yourselves*

Notice the Greek says “yourselves” – the Lord is telling us to love ourselves in the same manner as we love others, and to love others in the same manner as we love ourselves!

Mathew 19:19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.

Many times we have a difficult time forgiving ourselves and seeing ourselves “as good” as we think someone else is. We *condemn* ourselves for not “measuring up.”

This is a good place to remind ourselves about the sources of the knowledge of sin in our life:

1. Conviction – this comes from the Holy Spirit. He says, “Son, daughter, this “(fill in the blank)” grieves me. It is against My character. It is not part of My likeness and I don’t want it to be part of yours. It will hurt you, change you, embarrass you, and all sorts of evil will befall you. Turn away (repent) from it and come to Me.”
2. Condemnation – this is from the devil himself. He wants you to believe, after partaking of his enticement, that you can never face God again. You have failed, you are no good. He convinces you that no matter how hard you try, you will keep on doing it and never be able to stop, so why try?

Thank the Lord that He has given us much instruction in His Word that explains the difference between conviction and condemnation! We are to listen to His voice and not the voice of the “accuser of the brethren.”

Romans 6:17-21 NLT Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you have obeyed with all your heart the new teaching God has given you. **18** Now you are free

from sin, your old master, and you have become slaves to your new master, Righteousness. **19** I speak this way, using the illustration of slaves and masters, because it is easy to understand. Before, you let yourselves be slaves of impurity and lawlessness. Now you must choose to be slaves of righteousness so that you will become holy. **20** In those days, when you were slaves of sin, you weren't concerned with doing what was right. **21** And what was the result? It was not good, since **now you are ashamed** of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom.

So how do we handle this shame? Do we hide ourselves and never give our testimony? No! If we have walked away from lies, deceit, the enticements of the enemy, and we have chosen Christ, we win! We have nothing to be ashamed of, and everything to testify about!

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him (the devil) because of the *blood of the Lamb* and because of *the word of their testimony*, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

So then, our testimony is a **key component** to overcoming the **condemnation** of the enemy!

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" - Romans 7:24

Read this account about ancient Rome:

The ancient Roman Emperors were renowned for their ability to think up hideous forms of punishment. Crucifixion was one such form of punishment. But there was another - that of binding the corpse of a murder victim to the back of the murderer! Under penalty of death, no one was allowed to remove the corpse from the body of the *condemned* person.

The words of Paul in the above-passage bring to mind this gruesome practice of carrying around a 'dead body,' much like a man condemned. It is as if Paul felt that something dead was strapped to him and accompanied him wherever he went. We know he did not mean this literally! So what was he trying to say?

Paul was expressing the experience of every believer. Even though we long for purity and holiness, yet at times we feel bound helplessly to the "dead body" of our sinful nature. Even though we know that we are 'new creatures' in Christ, and that our physical bodies are not in themselves evil, the *tendency to sin* seems to be always carried around with us. We often feel (like Paul), that *we do* what we *do not want to do*, and *we do not do* the things that *we want to do*. How often do we cry out like Paul "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

But Paul discovered the antidote to the feeling of carrying around this burdensome 'corpse.' We find his answer in Chapter 8 of Romans. He declares that through the forgiveness of Christ he is freed from eternal condemnation (8:1). He recognizes that by the power of the indwelling Spirit he is *empowered* to do God's will (8:9). And finally, he finds encouragement in the knowledge that one day even his mortal body would be redeemed (8:23).

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If we *condemn* ourselves like this man was condemned, the corpse of condemnation will eat us alive! It is a burden too large to carry and rots away at who we are! It saps our strength and

takes the life from our steps! Christ has freed us from condemnation! Don't take anything the devil wants to give you! Condemnation is from the devil, leave it with the devil!

So what do we do when we hear the voice of condemnation in our ear? We rehearse our testimony! We tell ourselves (and the devil) what Jesus has done for us! We bury the voice of condemnation with that dead guy, instead of carrying them both around with us! We tell it to get back in the grave where Jesus buried it!

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Colossians 3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

The “old you” is dead. Bury it instead of carrying it around! Then rejoice in the Lord and dance on the dead guy!

Rejoice *Gr.* – Sing, dance, twirl, spin



Next week we will study “**PRAYER**” - Learning right-relatedness to God - the best and most fulfilling part of your day!