



November 8th, 2015

Turning To God's Transforming Power

1. Reject the FALSE NARRATIVE:

IF YOU DID IT ONCE, YOU'LL DO IT AGAIN!

Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly. - Proverbs 26:11 (ESV)

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. - Romans 7:18-20 (ESV)

"What could be more frustrating than being a Christian who thinks himself to be primarily a self-centered sinner, yet whose purpose in life is to produce God-centered holiness?" - David C. Needham

2. Embrace the JESUS NARRATIVE:

GOD MAKES US SAINTS

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours - 1Corinthians 1:2 (ESV)

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. - Ephesians 5:3 (ESV)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. - John 3:36 (ESV)

The Saint's True Identity...

1. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE IN CHRIST

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses... - Colossians 3:13 (ESV)

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. - Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. - Colossians 3:3 (ESV)

2. A BRAND NEW CREATION

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. - 2Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

3. STILL AT WAR WITH THE FLESH

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. - Galatians 5:17 (ESV)

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. - Romans 6:14

Country Dogs and City Dogs

A NEW WAY OF LIVING: ABIDING IN CHRIST

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. - John 15:4-5

"The question is not: How much are you going to accomplish? Can you show some results? But: Are you in love with Jesus?... In our world of loneliness and despair, there is an enormous need for men and women who know the heart of God; a heart that forgives, cares, reaches out and wants to heal." - Henri Nouwen

I Will Turn To God by...

- Memorizing **Galatians 2:20**
- Embracing my true identity as a saint.
- Daily standing against the flesh by abiding in Christ.
- Surrendering my life, for the first time, to Christ as my Savior.

WALK THE TALK A Growth Group Guide

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word "saint"? Who is the most saintly person you have ever met? What about their life helps you to see them in this way?
2. Do you think of yourself more as a sinner or as a saint? Why?
3. Describe your level of awareness that Christ's life in you is the key to your Christian identity.
4. What has helped you in the past to live in the Spirit rather than in the flesh?
5. Explain how, even though sin remains in the Christian, its power has been broken and it must not reign.
6. How do we abide in Christ? Have you ever done this? How might it help you in the struggle with temptation?

SOUL TRAINING – SOLITUDE

A Personal Transformation Exercise

The Principle:

The central aim of this sermon has been to help you understand who you are. Christians are those in whom Christ dwells. But since it's likely that we have built our sense of self on wrong core narratives ("I am really good," "I am really bad," "I am pretty," or "I am fat"), we need to engage in an activity that will help us experience this new core narrative: solitude.

Solitude is spending time apart from other people as well as spending time apart from external, artificial input (i.e. TV, video games, cell phones, social media, etc.). Usually we experience solitude when no one happens to be around. But that's not the kind of solitude we're describing. Effective solitude is intentional time alone with ourselves and with God. Then God can do something powerful within us in the area of identity. When we step away from people for a period of time, there is no one to impress, no one's opinion of us, and no image to live up to or down to.

The Plan:

The goal this week is to try and have solitude. Try to fit in an hour or two of time where you are alone. This might take some strategic scheduling. Take this time to reflect on who you are in Christ. Focus your thoughts on verses in the Bible that speak directly to our identity.

John 1:12; Romans 5:1, 8:1, 8:9, 8:38-39; Colossians 2:13, 3:4; Ephesians 2:4, 2:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18

A word to extroverts

Extroverts are people who get their energy from being around people. Generally speaking, extroverts do not enjoy being alone. For them, solitude will be difficult and the idea of spending an hour or two alone can be painful. If you are extroverted, please understand that solitude is important, and yet, your personality may not be able to handle a full hour alone. Try doing it 15-30 minutes at a time. Start slowly and ease into it over the next several weeks or months. There's not something wrong with you, it will just take a little more time to be able to spend an hour by yourself.