

FREEWAY

A NOT-SO-PERFECT GUIDE TO FREEDOM

Week 6: Acceptance

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The Power of Positive Labels *(from our Spiritual Health Self Assessment)*

Crawl Stage

Much like the crawl stage of human development, I am still fairly dependent on others. I often look to others to tell me who I am and what I should do. I have been introduced to Jesus Christ and have given my life to Him but still look to others to tell me what this means and how I should proceed. I'm at the beginning of my spiritual life.

Walk Stage

In the walk stage, I have a greater understanding of who I am as a son or daughter of God but am still in the beginning stages of making my faith my own. I have adopted "church" culture and feel like I belong. I may have a tendency toward following a moral code as I learn "the law" but don't yet understand the "Spirit of the Law" (the principle behind the law). I may engage in Bible reading and prayer through lenses of guilt or fear and may view God or the church more through my family background rather than biblical understanding. My spiritual life is taking on definition but is still largely defined by church culture.

Run Stage

In the run stage, I am beginning to "own" my faith and look less to others for answers. I am not afraid to ask the hard questions and navigate a broken world through my faith in God. I understand that no one can walk my path to freedom for me, but that I get there by addressing and working through the deep issues of my heart and soul, my relationships, my emotions and the deep underlying patterns and choices that make up my life. I am not afraid to make the hard choices that lead to the freedom that Christ came and died for. I no longer see my spiritual life as separate from the rest of my life.

Race Stage

In the race stage, my faith in and relationship with God are my own and it impacts every area of my life. I understand that my faith journey is a lifetime process. I have done much of the hard work to overcome and be healed from hurts that have kept me bound. Harmful habitual ways of thinking, feeling or behaving no longer have a hold on or rule over me. If I stumble or struggle, I know how to respond kindly and authentically to myself and what to do to get help from God and others. I look at my life as a whole and not as separate parts (spiritual, secular, natural, etc.).

The Power of Negative Labels:

You are _____.

(Continues on back)

Ephesians 4:26-32

²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Biblical Truths

- You can be angry and not sin.
- God call us to put off the destructive and embrace the constructive.

3 Kinds of Sinful Anger

Bitterness (continual hope that another person is harmed)

Rage (white heat) and anger (settled condition) = clamming up

Brawling and Slander = blowing up

- God says to put off your desire to ventilate or stuff your anger.
- Direct your anger at the true root of the problem.
- Remember your identity and put on that which is true of you: kindness, compassion, forgiveness.

My dignity as Abba's child is my most coherent sense of self.

– Brennan Manning

Next Steps

Baptism Classes today after services. See today's program insert for details.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What is one aspect of “you” that you would like to change? Why?
- 2) Read the descriptions of the spiritual health stages on the front. Which best describes you spiritual life today?
- 3) Have you overcome any negative labels from your childhood? How?
- 4) Of the three kinds of sinful anger, which one most often catches you?
- 5) Grant described an area of his life that has been under God's construction. What area of your life do you believe needs to undergo the same process? What is your next step?
- 6) What do you need prayer for today and this week?