

Appropriation of Christ as Life: Moving from Head to Heart

A. The need for a miraculous answer to chronic psychological issues

Being made in God's image we have ultimate needs: love, acceptance, worth, belonging, security (especially for women), and significance (especially for men). How many needs were met by God in Adam and Eve prior to the fall? 100% of them! But after the fall we're in a sin-cursed world with people running around trying to fulfill ultimate needs with substitutes--usually personal relationships. The primary human vessels to address these needs are not met by relationships we have experienced rejection.

What's the antidote for rejection? Psychology uses self-help and self-esteem. We believe God has a better way: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8). Through the Exchanged Life (Gal. 2:20) and freedom in Christ (John 8:32), we experience God as our Ultimate Source. He heals our hurts and gives us a new, unchangeable identity and adequate resources for living.

B. What is the entrance ramp to this highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8)?

1. *Be convicted of your flesh*

When we were saved, God convicted us of our sins and revealed Christ's death for us. For abundant living, the Holy Spirit convicts us of "self" with its unique version of the flesh. The remedy is a discovery of our death with Christ. (Cf. Phil. 3:3-10)

2. *Be broken of self-will, self-sufficiency, and pride.*

Full surrender is a prerequisite to exchanging our life for Christ's life (Rom. 12:1,2). This leads to giving up on our ability to live the Christian life in any other way than radical dependence on Christ within. (Cf. Rom. 7:24,25; John 12:24; 2 Cor. 12:9,10)

3. *Learn the truths of identification with Christ.*

We are not separate from Christ; we have been united with Him in spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). He is the Vine, we are branches (John 15:1-8)

4. *Be illumined by the Holy Spirit as to the personal reality and significance of identification with Christ.*

The Holy Spirit is credited with convincing us that Jesus Christ is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). He is also the One who illumines us to the personal reality of identification--dropping this truth from head to heart, from knowledge to experience. (1 Cor. 2:11-13)

5. *Appropriate Christ as Life by faith.*

Just as we were saved from hell by grace through faith, we can be saved from self by grace through faith. Abundant ual process. However, the believer's focus is not on the experience, but on the person of Christ our Life.

Paul's testimony can be yours daily: "I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me." (Galatians 2:20; Cf. Col. 2:6,7; Rom. 6:11; 1 John 5:4

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