

## Paradise Lost and Restored: What is Discipleship? (Part 5)

Ricardo Campos, Pastor Grace Chapel, Orange, CA May 31, 2015

### I. Introduction

What's your day to day existence like? Do you feel like taking a bite out of life or like life is taking a bite out of you? What keeps us from living lives that satisfy versus lives that seem to take the life right out of us? Is it possible to turn it around or are there situations that are so bad that they can't be fixed? If it is possible, how?

### II. Don't Let Satan Steal Your Destiny, You Were Meant to Live not Survive

Discipleship is about three relationships: Up (relationship with God), In (relationship with those you consider your family whether they're related to you or not), and Out (relationship with the world around you). Satan's goal is to keep you from God and the destiny He has for you. If he succeeds, then you'll see God differently, yourself and your family differently, and those around you differently. Therefore, whether you're a Christian or not, if your relationship with God is off, then the other two relationships will be affected:

**A woman suffers from panic/anxiety attacks:** all her mother had to do is give her one look, say one harsh word and it would send her into a panic attack....why?

Her view of God, she was a Christian, had been for many, many years. She knew that God loved and cared for her. But when her mother was around, whatever she believed about God disappeared. Why? Because all she could see is what her mother saw, a worthless woman who couldn't do anything right. This is not what God saw, but it didn't matter because her mother's false view kept her from seeing God altogether. It made it impossible for God to rescue her from this false identity and the panic attacks it gave her. She prayed to God and asked others to pray, but her mother's spell couldn't be broken. Why? Because her false identity turned God into a sounding board in the sky who would listen to her prayers and anxieties, but who couldn't really do anything to help her.

Her view of herself: her mother taught her from a very young age that she was worthless and that there was something wrong with her. As she grew older her mom taught her that she was a terrible daughter who was incompetent, uncaring, and incapable. Thus, every time her mother gave her a disapproving look or critical word, it was a dagger in her heart that reminded her of who she was: a worthless little girl who couldn't do anything right.

Her view of her life, since she saw herself as someone who couldn't do anything right, she constantly doubted herself and was insecure about everything she did. And she resigned herself to this life, a life filled with doubts, insecurities, and panic attacks. She believed that she was a daughter who struggled with her mother and got anxiety attacks because of it.

God frees her from her panic attacks, One day she asked her pastor to pray for her because her mother was coming to stay for a few days and it terrified her. Her pastor knew that God didn't want her suffering this way—that's why He sent His Son, Luke 4:18! He began to meet with her and God freed her from her false identity. He showed her who she really was: a faithful, capable, and selfless daughter. This freed her to see God as a Loving Father who was proud of her, which freed her to actually love her abusive mother.

**A couple wants to divorce:** the wife had a long-standing affair when her husband began focusing all his attention at work.

Her view of God, though she wasn't a Christian, she believed that God existed. But since she had a terrible view of herself, she believed that God looked at her the same way her father did: not too pretty, nor too bright, and nothing to be proud of. And since God knows everything, God knew just how bad she really was even though she may fool others.

Her view of herself, the most important thing to her was a man's undivided love and attention. Why? Her father never showed her proper love and approval. The first time she heard "I love you" or "I'm proud of you" from her father was when she was in her 20's. She was intelligent and good-looking, but she constantly doubted both her looks and intelligence. If she looked great or did something great, it wasn't real until someone else validated it. Thus, she was constantly looking for love and validation from every man she dated. And she put up with the worst behavior from men just to get that love and approval.

Her view of her life, she missed days at work because she was constantly depressed or anxious about her ability to perform. Even though she was very bright and did great work, her doubts about herself ruled her life. In her personal life, since she believed she wasn't much of a catch, she settled for very abusive boyfriends and she did anything to keep their love and approval. When she finally married one, she thought that her love and approval would never leave. But then her husband started focusing his attention at work. She was desperate to have her love and approval so she went looking for it outside her marriage.

His view of God, though he was raised by Christian parents, they did not instill in him a personal sense of God. He believed that God was someone you studied about in church or in the Bible study he initiated in college, but He wasn't a real Person. Thus, he had no way of knowing God much less asking Him for help with the success he wanted out of life.

His view of himself, his friends were wealthy and successful and he wanted the same, success in business. When this failed, he sought success in competitive sport, but he was unaware that this is why he was semi-addicted to exercise. He believed that he did it for fitness, but he was actually trying to replace business success with success in competitive sport. Thus, when he failed in business, he poured all his energy into exercise. When he married, he loved his wife but his identity came from his success or lack thereof. So his marriage and wife suffered while he tried harder and harder to succeed in life. And if his wife complained about his time at work or with exercise or with his friends, he saw her as a nagging wife who wanted to control him and take away his freedom.

His view of his life, because of how he saw himself—always reaching for success but never achieving it—he had a string of failed jobs and relationships including a previous divorce due to his wife's infidelity. Thus, he believed that his life would be doomed with failures in business and his personal life. He wondered if he would ever find a faithful wife.

God frees them and their marriage from Satan's lies, the wife cried out to her pastor. He met with her and informed her that she had to tell her husband about the affair. She was terrified but she did it. Then the husband went to see the pastor. As he met with both of them, God began to reveal to them the false identities they were living. She had several struggles along the way, even continuing the affair while they met with the pastor. The husband found out and was beside himself eager for divorce. But Christ kept urging him to die for his wife and forgive her. It was brutally painful, but he forgave her. The wife finally came clean with God and He healed her of her false identity. But He also healed the husband of his and gave them both a marriage full of love and respect.

**A man battles a 50-year depression:** his dad taught him that he would always be a loser who would never amount to anything. His mom echoed this by telling him that he carried the genetic flaws of his father and his uncles.

*His view of God,* he became a Christian later in life, but God was never introduced to him in a personal way. Thus, he believed that God was real and there, but He was not real or personal enough to help Him. He believed that he was a child of God who would go to heaven when he died, but he didn't see God as a Loving Father who wanted to end his depression.

*His view of himself,* when his father was in a great mood, he praised him to the point of instilling arrogance in him. The rest of the time his father told him that he was a loser who had no friends. His mother added insult to injury by telling him that he would turn out just like his father and all the men in his family: men who had severe emotional and mental problems and who turned to alcohol from time to time to cope. Thus, he believed that he was a man who on the one hand was too good for people but on the other was a loser who would constantly struggle with depression. And this is who he became: an arrogant, difficult-to-live-with, insecure, depressed, loser who needed anti-depressants.

*His view of his life,* since all he saw was a loser, everything bad that happened in his life confirmed the fact that he was a loser. So when he got married and had a daughter who became a lesbian, he deserved it because all the men in his father's family are losers who can't do anything right. And when he remarried and had children with learning disorders and began having problems with his wife, this too was predictable because these are the only types of families and marriages his heritage could produce. Therefore, he believed that his life would forever be one giant struggle with depression and repeated failures.

*God frees him from Satan's lies,* in desperation he cried out to a church he didn't even know. The pastor heard him and began meeting with him. God showed him that everything he believed about God, himself, and his life were lies perpetrated by Satan through his parents and his life. As God removed the blinders, he began to see and live his true identity, the identity that God gave him from birth, Psalm 139:13-16. Therefore, he began living his life in Christ's Kingdom instead of Satan's darkness. Christ's salvation became real. That is, the more he walked with Christ, the more he saw Him as a real Person who was there to help him with his wife and children. Since he was now living his new and true identity, his relationship with his wife and children changed because he was now the loving father and husband he was meant to be.

### III. Conclusion

*"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*