

New Testament realities 1 of 3; Unbelieving the lies - 20210807

Hi all,

When I came to the Father when I was 16, my horrible self-image came with me: Rejected by my earth-dad, struggling in school, morally up and down, and burdened by being the oldest of 4 children with my suddenly single mom trying to raise us. I had the pressure of suddenly being the 'enforcer' in place of my dad, and generally not caring about, school, life, and not having direction or even desire to do anything. That was who I was.

But when I came to know the Father, He was just the opposite. I would read in the Bible a truth of His love, but internally argue against that love because of how I felt about myself. I knew my past. I knew my sins. I knew my hurts. I knew the anger and bitterness at the unfairness of life in my heart. I knew the worst about myself.

When I compared what I knew about myself with what the Word said of His love for me, it was hard to believe. The differences were so vast, so opposite. How could He have faith in me when I didn't have faith in me?

Seeking agreement

"When Satan speaks a lie, he speaks of himself" is what Jesus told the religious leaders in John 8:44.

Satan is alone when he speaks a lie, and hopes we will latch onto the lie, creating agreement between him and us, thus giving him and his minions access into our life.

First came the awareness when I became a believer, that my horrible self-image and all the other 'bad' things in my heart, were sin and something to be rejected. I hadn't thought of those things as 'sin' but rather this is just life, just what I saw around me, though intuitively I knew the behavior of some of my high school classmates would lead them to destruction and an early grave. So when I came to the Lord I first had to believe the 'negative' desires and thoughts in me had their roots in darkness, in Satan's realm.

Once I saw that and understood it, I realized it was the first step to seeing life from God's point of view. So that was good. Then I had to un-believe all that reality - it was true - those things did happen to us as a family, my parents really divorced and so on. I really was angry, hurt, and so on - that was all true and real, but grounded in the darkness of Satan's realm. Spiritually I was no longer in agreement with him, but mentally and emotionally I had to break that agreement. I had to think new thoughts. Feel new feelings.

Breaking the agreement

If you un-believe the truth as Satan sees you, it breaks the agreement so Satan is once again literally in the dark, no longer having access to your life. But I learned I could not hang on to Satan's plans and thoughts for me while also trying to believe God's Word and plans for me.

James said in 1:7-8 that if we seek God's wisdom we cannot be double minded; it's either our wisdom of God's wisdom - grasping both is unstable and such a one will not receive what they need from the Lord.

That was me - on the one hand knowing and therefore fully believing the darkest parts of my heart, versus what God said about me. Like two boxers standing in their respective corners glaring at each other before the fight starts, so too was there a boxing match inside of me, fighting against what God said because I knew my own heart.

But intuitively I knew this: I would have to un-believe what Satan said about me, which seemed to be true for I had lived it, in order to make what God said about me a reality. You cannot hang onto two masters. You cannot be double minded and think you will receive from the Lord. You will stay in misery until you are willing to let go of how the truth of your past life has made you into who you were when you came to the Lord, and choose to believe the larger truth of what the Father and Lord Jesus have done for you. There is no other way. Forgetting the past and reaching forward, as Paul said to the Philippians.

Who won?

I remember as a 16 and then 17 year old purposely going to war against what I thought of myself. I had to constantly remind myself that what God said about me is true no matter how I felt. Emotions lie. God's Word is truth. If I believe the truth of what He says, my emotions will line up with those truths. I made myself think and feel differently based on what He said of me.

I'm thankful I had that internal war as a teenager. It allowed me to take the best of my shattered life, learn from my mistakes, and fully believe what my Heavenly Father said about me. Many Christians are now going through what I went through back then. I feel for them.

But there is no laying on of hands, no prayer, no prophetic word that can change your thoughts and emotions. The Christian in torment are those who know what God says, but they are choosing to believe their past and what they know of their dark inner self more than God's Word, because that is what they feel. They want someone to give them a word, pray for them, make it all go away. It doesn't work like that. Been there, done that.

There is no way around it - we must renew our mind to think like God thinks of us in order to undergo the metamorphosis Romans 12:1-2 talk about. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The Greek word 'transformed' is metamorphosis. The same process a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. That's us. Only we can do it. Only we can change how we feel and how we think. There is no other way presented in scripture. It's up to you. A stack of teachings from the best teachers can't do it. Each person must learn to control their thoughts and emotions. It's hard, but there is no other way to grow up in Christ. We have to think His thoughts, then His emotions naturally follow.

Unfortunately our cultures and societies teach us our emotions are real and the basis on which we reason and make decisions. The Bible teaches it is reasoning and thinking new thoughts as the basis for decision making. You are not subject to your emotions. Start controlling them. How does one do that?

And that's where we'll pick it up next week - until then, blessings,
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New Testament Realities 2 of 3, What changed my life - 20210814

Hi all,

I shared briefly last week about what I thought of myself after my dad left our family. As the oldest of 4 children, and being big for my age, my mom later apologized for putting so much on me. She explained I was 'so darn big' that she treated me like an adult when I was barely a teenager.

For me as an 11 year old, having mom and dad divorce (which was not common in those days and certainly had never been heard of in our circle of friends), it was devastating. My grades nose-dived, I dropped out of everything from Scouts to art classes to sports - I just didn't care.

So when my friend Janny told me in 10th grade German language class that she being Catholic, knew the God behind the Sunday morning liturgy, I was curious. I was searching for a dad. I dropped out of Scouts because all the other boys had fathers to go with them on camping and canoeing trips. Not me. So I quit. I was searching for a dad from age 11 to 16. Janny told me I could know my heavenly Father.

My 'salvation prayer' went something like this: "Jesus. If you really do have the last word on my life, then the only thing that matters is your opinion. So it only makes sense to serve you now, so come into my heart, I give it to you."

And then I went straight to the Father. Intuitively without knowing the Word, I knew Jesus was merely the heavenly adoption agency used by the Father to adopt me into His family. Which also curiously caused me to be born into the family - both born into and adopted. The adoption part meant I was chosen, for when a baby is born you get what you get. But a child adopted is special in that they were picked, chosen, from among others. I went to the Father and didn't look back.

But I brought all that junk with me. Spiritually I was born again, but emotionally and in my thinking I was still battling with all the above. It was a process. But I changed very quickly, and this is how:

What changed my life

This is the process I went through. This changed my life, and it can change yours or that of someone you know. First was Colossians 1:12-13:

"Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us able to take part in the inheritance of the saints in light; having delivered us from the authority of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

In one corner was my argument that I can't walk with the Father God. I have no natural abilities, I certainly didn't understand algebra or care about school. My dad left our family choosing to raise his new wife's kids as his own. I wasn't wanted, and what I did want was every vice my anger and hurt was driving me to.

In the other corner was 'Giving thanks to the Father who has made us able to take part...' My thoughts had to fight it out. My emotions had to be put down. I forcibly made myself believe that my Father has made me able to take part of what He has done for me. That wasn't instant. I had to think on that for days...weighing my own faith in my failings arguing against His faith in me and what He did to enable me to take part in what He had for me.

What built on that and really made the difference was this statement: "Having delivered us from the power (authority) of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

That statement completely destroyed my arguments 'in the other corner'. I reasoned that if I have already been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and translated into heaven, then the battle is over. I can simply think right thoughts and those will produce right emotions, and I can move forward.

That single verse broke something inside me. When I was born again the Father had already at that moment, translated me out and away from the authority of darkness and put me in His Son's kingdom. When a police officer holds up their hand to stop traffic, that is authority. If they use their gun to stop traffic, that is power.

The Greek is 'authority' (exousia) not 'power' (dunamis) as the King James Version has it. Satan has no authority over me, indeed I have authority over him, and we two have nothing in common any longer. I had to start thinking as God the Father saw me, as that kid translated out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of light.

I began to see Satan for what he is; Powerless, working by fear and intimidation to ignorant or fearful masses of people who don't know what the Heavenly Father has done for them. Fear left me, confidence took its place.

This first thing I remember the Father saying to me was at that time: "A person's body gives them authority while they are alive on the earth. But when the body dies, their spirit and soul automatically become subject to the kingdom they are a citizen of."

(Yes, '...are a citizen of' is improper English, but that's how I talked so He spoke to me according to my age, maturity and knowledge. If He had spoken that to me 10 years later He might have said "...of which you are a citizen", which is proper grammar. This principle is why in prophecy for instance, the word can be spoken by someone with improper grammar yet it is still a valid word from the Lord - because the divine flows through the imperfect.)

It was then I asked the Father: "How can you send people to hell?" He responded to my question with a question: "What does a judge do?" I thought for a minute, then said, "A judge applies the sentence." He responded: "Very well, and what does a jury do?" I thought again, and said, "A jury decides guilt or innocence." He answered: "Exactly. The Word decides guilt or innocence, the judge just applies the sentence. I just apply the sentence."

For me, as a 16 or 17 year old, that was deep thinking. But it settled things, and I had for the first time, an actual conversation with my Father. I understood the words of Jesus in John 12:48: "He that rejects me and my words has one that will judge him: The words that I have spoken, that is what will judge him on the last day." The Word is the jury, the Father merely applies the sentence.

These verses and these revelations and conversations gradually started to change my thinking. As that immature teenager the above instruction let me know I was 100% responsible for my life. It was like a father sharing foundational principles by which the dad hopes his son will grasp and make part of his life.

My advice to countless people has been to start in Ephesians 1 and go through everywhere you see the word 'God' and insert 'Father', for that is who Paul is writing about. Then stop and think on each verse, days or weeks if needed, until every argument you have against that truth is brought captive to the obedience of Christ. Apply yourself to it. And by pausing, by this thinking on, meditating on, you give the Father the opportunity to show you things, to personalize it to you and your life....and we'll pick it up next week, until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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New Testament Realities 3 of 3; thinking like God - 20210821

Hi all,

I shared last week some of the first things the Father spoke to me, which helped transform my thinking by allowing me to un-believe the past truths about myself to reach for and grasp the New Testament reality of life in Christ.

Another thing the Father spoke to me when I was a teen that helped me look to the 'big picture' was this:

"You'll find when you receive your glorified body, it won't be subject to the natural laws of the earth." I asked, "What do you mean?" He replied: "If you want to walk you can walk, if you want to run you can run, if you want to float you can float, if you want to fly you can fly, if you want to be somewhere at the speed of thought, you can be there."

Why did this have such an impact on me? Because it got my eyes off me and my past and who I thought I was, and onto the future with Him. It broke my attention on little old sorry me and all my guilt and anger and everything else to look to the future.

I've found that same principle is what Paul did, as he told the Philippians in 3:13-14: "I don't think I've taken hold of these things yet, but this one thing I do; I am forgetting those things behind, and reaching forward to those things ahead of me, to the prize which is the higher calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The next thing...

Ephesians 1:3 captured my attention for weeks: "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ."

That is New Testament reality. No matter my circumstance, no matter what I feel about me, no matter what parts of life I don't understand and want to be different: I have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heaven.

Verse 4 continues: "...He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world..." That is NT reality. You and I have been adopted, chosen by God long before the foundation of the world.

For me as a teenager whose dad had walked out on the family to start a new one with someone else, it rocked my world. I had to think on the fact no matter what happened or what will happen on earth, I was chosen, adopted, by the Heavenly Father. And it was all determined before the creation of the world.

By my Father. Not the one who walked out on the family, but by my heavenly Father. And He wanted me and made plans for me to be in His family before the world was created.

These are foundational verses for all of us, but for me as a teenager, it changed what I thought of myself. I've seen these same truths change many adults since then. But these truths will only change someone's life if they apply themselves to thinking these thoughts while rejecting their old thoughts.

That is the process of 'renewing the mind' as Romans 12:1-2 say. There is no other way to change presented in scripture. The laying on of hands is for blessing, or for setting apart for God's use, for receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit, or for healing - but nowhere in the NT is the laying on of hands presented as a cure-all for one questioning their salvation, or absorbed in self-guilt and unforgiveness.

Each person must accept the New Testament realities as presented, and only then, when they start thinking those thoughts, are their emotions and thoughts changed.

What the NT says about prayer

This last part runs contrary to the thoughts of many Christians, yet I present it repeatedly, for there is always someone who is changed by it. It is so radical many Christians have questioned me when I have taught it. Yet if you don't change your thinking and your practice, you'll never be effective in prayer nor in fellowship with the Lord. This New Testament truth is foundational: We ask of the Father, not of Jesus.

In Luke 11 Jesus said, "Pray this way: Our Father who is in heaven..." Not: "Jesus, I ask..."

In John 16:23 speaking of when He would ascend to heaven: "In that day you'll ask me nothing. Truly, truly I say to you; Whatever you ask the Father in my name He will give it to you."

Every prayer in the NT is to the Father. In Acts 4:24-30 when Peter and John are released by the authorities, they go back to their people and gather them to report what happened, and to pray:

"Lord, you are God, who has made the heavens, earth, the sea, and all life in them....now stretch forth your hand to heal by the name of your holy child Jesus."

Paul in Ephesians 1:17-19: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him..."

Paul in Ephesians 3:14-20: "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you according to His riches in glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit in your inner man..."

If you are asking Jesus for something in your prayers, prayer becomes a hit and miss practice. Legally it is the Father who is the 'Father of lights' and from whom 'every good gift and every perfect gift' comes." (James 1:17-18)

These truths, that we have been blessed with all heavenly blessings by our Father, that we are seated in the heavenlies with Him by the Father, that He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that the Father is to whom we pray - is New Testament reality.

To walk in His ways. To make these truths real in our lives, you must reject thoughts contrary to them. You must reject feelings that are contrary to them, and make yourself think and feel in agreement with them.

These are the ways He thinks of us

We are told in Philippians 1:5: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." We are to think of ourselves as the Father thinks of us.

He thinks of us as His children, born into the family when He by His Spirit recreated our spirit-man. He thinks He adopted us as well. He thinks He has blessed us in the heavenly places with all spiritual blessings. He thinks He has given us authority to use the name of His Son to combat the evil one. He

thinks you and I have His mind in us, the mind of Christ. He thinks, "...in the ages to come He will continue to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace which is towards us in Christ Jesus."
(Ephesians 2:7)

If our Father in heaven thinks that, Jesus thinks that too. Should we as royal children of the Father, we who have been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, think like that too? Stay with it, spend as much time as needed in Ephesians chapters 1 and 2, and Colossians 1 until those truths become a reality. Once you have those in you, then you think His thoughts and it makes hearing the Father so much easier - for you are thinking alike.

New subject next week, until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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