



Celebrate! The Lost Is Found

Luke 15:1-1

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?”

September 11, 2016

Thoughts for the Week

If there is one thing that we as humans fear the most, it is rejection. We need to feel accepted, because then, we are assured of a place in society where we belong, we matter.

Approval: An acceptance of something as satisfactory, favorable attitude or opinion, formal consent or sanction.

Take a moment to look around - I bet you will find people striving for approval in nearly every aspect of their lives. Goodness, its normal isn't it? We want our employers to approve of our work, we would like our significant other to look at us in a favorable light and we want our friends to like us – but should we actively seek approval to the extent that we are untrue to ourselves?

“When you believe in yourself, you don't try to convince others. Because you are content with yourself, you don't need others' approval. Because you accept yourself, the whole world accepts you.” (adapted Lau Tsu)

People who have an insatiable need for approval may depend on others to give them a sense of worth, and will do almost anything to avoid hurting others' feelings to the extent of hiding or denying their own feelings. Some perhaps fret over consequences so much so they never make a decision or stand their ground. Most are poor at problem solving, lack self-confidence, tell lies if they think conflict will arise from telling the truth, will work very hard at keeping the peace in any relationship and are people pleasers. Often they have unrealistic ideals that if they can be a *good* adult, spouse, parent or worker they do not have the freedom to be themselves, in case it's not acceptable.

Why? What happened? Well, usually it stems from a lack of positive reinforcement and/or fear of rejection or abandonment as a child. Perhaps a too restricted upbringing resulted in them never becoming emotionally independent or they felt like they never fitted in and now they are dependent on affirmations from others all the time. Could be that as teenagers they felt the need to succumb to peer pressure to measure their worth or sense of belonging. Do you see yourself in any of these examples above?

So what are we going to do now? How can we overcome this constant feeding frenzy on the approval of others that make us dance till we drop? Well, for one, we have to realize that others can take advantage of us, make us work harder at being what THEY want us to be. On the other hand they may be overwhelmed by our neediness and move away or they might be concerned in case they say the wrong thing and get tired of 'walking on eggs'. Either way, we stand to lose that which we crave the most.

We need to get rid of the irrational belief that we need others' approval to feel good about ourselves. We have to acknowledge our fear of rejection and disapproval and understand that we have allowed this to overtake our lives to such an extent that we are essentially not living our own lives, but we are someone else every time we meet with people in different spheres of life. We are living a lie, pretending to be what we are not.

This week try to make a list of all your positive traits, ask friends and family too. Define what things are important to YOU and plot a plan of action of how you are going to tell others. List the benefits of being honest with yourself and your feelings and what you stand to gain. It may be uncharted territory but everyone needs to begin somewhere.

Happy Birthday - Kathy (9/17)

One in Christ Moment

"Everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:33

When we first hear this statement, it seems that Jesus is making an unrealistic demand upon us. How can we renounce all of our possessions? We need them to live.

However, what we must renounce is the belief that they belong to us. Everything that we have belongs to God alone. All of our resources are entrusted to us not only for our own use, but also so that we can help others.

Once we renounce the idea that we possess or are entitled to anything, it is much easier to share the many gifts that God has given us. Then we truly are His Disciples.

"Everything I have is yours." Luke 15:31

Our Heavenly Father gives us everything, including the chance to share in His eternal kingdom.

Yet, like the Prodigal Son we are often lured away by the materialism of our society.

Do we really want to turn our backs on all that God offers in exchange for a material wealth that has no lasting value?