



UNCONDITIONAL SELF-ACCEPTANCE IN CHRIST

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Texts

Jeremiah 1:4-10:

⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” ⁶ Then said I: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth.” ⁷ But the Lord said to me: “Do not say ‘I *am* a youth,’ For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of their faces, For I *am* with you to deliver you,” says the Lord. ⁹ Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord saith to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.”

Jeremiah 29:11-13:

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Introduction

Reaching one's full potential will depend on how one views or accepts oneself. Jeremiah 1 introduces a young man hesitant to accept God's call, unable to go forward in carrying God's mission until he agreed with God that he was worth more than his excuses; until he began to accept himself in God. We can be high achievers – physicians, professors, engineers, psychologists, etc. – and still have issues with self-esteem and self-acceptance, and hence unable to reach the potential God intended for us. In our work places or in other settings, we see people going through pain and suffering due to lack of self-esteem and self-acceptance, despite their education or status. For most of these individuals, past pain and negative messages continue to control them despite their academic successes.

Therefore, before one is able to go further, it is important to determine self-esteem and self-acceptance in God. Self-esteem is how one feels and thinks about oneself. It is based on other people's evaluation as well as our own view of ourselves. It can be either negative or positive. With self-acceptance, however, this is where one simply says, "I am worth more than my evaluation and people's evaluation of me, because God values me. Circumstances and people may change, but God does not change in His evaluation of me."

The Call of Jeremiah

God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, to speak on His behalf. Jeremiah instead looked at himself, to his abilities as he thought of the task he was called upon to do, and declared, "Not me." Said another way, the conversation between God and Jeremiah could sound like this:

God: Knocks at the door of Jeremiah's house, then...
Jeremiah: "Who is there?"
God: "Jehovah, the God of Israel."
Jeremiah: "How can I help you?"



- God: “I am looking for a prophet. I am calling you to be a prophet to Israel and to other nations, to speak on my behalf to my people, Israel.”
- Jeremiah: “You came to the wrong house. Go next door. For I am but a youth and I can’t speak.”
- God: “Before you were born, I knew you. Before I formed you in your mother’s womb, I knew you. I set you apart and sanctified you to be a prophet. Jeremiah, you are a man for this time and I am counting on you.”

In this conversation, God answers all of Jeremiah’s excuses and points Jeremiah to Himself, as one who has unlimited resources for His servant. Jeremiah is left to accept God’s call, to accept himself and view himself as heaven views and accepts him. As Jeremiah places himself in the hands of the all-powerful God, he consequently becomes powerful and invincible, as God enables him.

In the same manner, God is saying to each one of us: “You are not an after-thought. You are special and unique, created with a mission, a position to fill. I knew you before you were born and I knew that you would be a teacher, a nurse, a doctor, a pastor, a lawyer, etc.” “And while your father was still thinking about how to propose to your mother, I knew you. And while your mother was wondering whether to say yes to your father’s proposal, I knew you. You are not an accident. You were not a surprise to me.”

God is personal. He addresses each one of us individually. You are His and He is yours. He thinks positively about you (Jeremiah 29:11-13). Further, in Psalm 139:

- 2-3 He knows you very well
- 7-9 you cannot hide from Him
- 14 you were created to praise Him
- 13-18 you were fearfully and wonderfully made; beautiful and handsome (He does not create ugly people).
- You were born with a purpose in God’s mind; born for success



- You are an asset for mission. You are capable of reaching the sphere of your influence, your family and friends.
- The question is: do you believe God, or do you believe your fears and self-doubt?

Believe What God Says About You

- In the midst of other voices that may put you down, do you see and value yourself as God sees and values you? By seeing and valuing yourself as God does, you get a sense of belonging, of being accepted and empowered by the merits of God Himself, rather than through what we have done or who we are. It no longer matters where we come from, but rather whom we belong to. As we continue to grow in His grace and love, He continues to mold us for His glory and will.
- In Christ, are you beautiful/handsome (fearfully and wonderfully made), or do you feel sorry for what He did in you? This would change the way you live your life and change your habits to please the One who loves and accepts you.
- As you serve or minister to others, will they see/feel His grace flowing through you as you have accepted yourself in Christ (giving part of yourself in the process, as you minister to others)? This would change the way you relate to others, family members and friends, seeing them as God's beautiful creation who need to be respected, saved and accepted.

Your Thoughts and Words About Self

- Manage your thoughts and your words about yourself. Think positively and speak positivity about yourself. Ellen White states that:

“No one but yourself can control your thoughts. In the struggle to reach the highest standard, success or failure will depend much upon the character and the manner in which the thoughts are disciplined. If the thoughts are right, then as a result the words will be right; the actions will be of that character to bring gladness and comfort and rest to



souls.” (Our High Calling, P. 112; Mind Character and Personality, Vol 2, P. 655).

- “The more you talk faith, the more faith you will have. The more you dwell upon discouragement, talking to others about your trials, and enlarging upon them, to enlist the sympathy which you crave, the more discouragements and trials you will have” (Manuscript 102, 1901).

- Further Ellen White concludes:

“But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words...Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are.” (The Desire of Ages, P.323).

- What do you say about and to yourself, whether positive or negative, travels to your brain, and the brain then influences the whole being to actualize these concepts.
- Your thoughts and words about yourself should be centered on the word of God and what it says about the value God places on you.
- Do not allow the look of circumstances to determine your worth, whether you succeed or not at what you attempt.
- Words are creative. And you determine your day and your mood by your thoughts and words.

Self-Acceptance and Self-Respect

- When it comes to self-acceptance and self-respect, Ellen White submits:

“It is not pleasing to God that you should demerit yourself. You should cultivate self-respect by living so you will be approved by your own conscience and before men and angels...’There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit’ (Romans 8:1). While we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought, the Word of God does not condemn a proper self-respect. As sons and daughters of God, we

should have conscious dignity of character, in which pride and self-important have no part.” (Our High Calling, P.143).

- “When the sunlight of God’s love illuminates the darkened chambers of the soul, restless weariness and dissatisfaction will cease and satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and energy to the body.” (The Ministry of Healing, P.247).
- “Man knows not his own value...He who comes to Jesus, he who believes on Him and makes Him his Example, realizes the meaning of the words “To them gave He power to become sons of God.” (Mind Character and Personality, Vol 1, P.10).
- This would mean that as we accept ourselves in God, as God has accepted us in Christ, we ought to respect ourselves in Christ, respect the price that God paid for our redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. Accepting Christ as our personal Saviour changes both our status and our class. We are now kings and queens in the kingdom of God. We are now shining stars in the sky, never meant to be drawn down by the weight of earthliness and its evils.

Challenges Due to Poor Self-acceptance

Poor Self-Acceptance Affects:

- *Spiritual Life:* lead to a lifeless spiritual experience, rampant self-doubt, and fears. When God says that you are accepted and loved as you are, you doubt His Word. As a result, doing so unknowingly following the voice of Satan and you unconsciously do his will instead of God’s will for your life.
- *Relationship Difficulties:* contributes to feelings of inadequacy, which leads to an inability to love and accept others because of your failure to love and accept yourself.
- *Physical Health Issues:* people with poor self-acceptance are more likely to have high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, poor sleep patterns, anxiety and depression.



- *Emotional and Psychological Problems:* poor self-acceptance affects the brain, creating low levels of cortisol, which contribute to lower levels of frontal lobe functioning, affecting reasoning and decision making. Consequently, impairing our capacity for forgiveness and empathy. Also, when one fails to accept oneself, one develops negative feelings associated with shame, guilt, lack of confidence, depression and anxiety.

Facing Life Each Day – Prayer

- As you face the challenges of life, having accepted yourself in Christ, your daily prayer is more likely to be: ‘Heavenly father, thank you for Jesus Christ, who is my Saviour and friend. As I go into the world today I do so as your beloved daughter/son, may Your Spirit work in the miracles of love, patience and humility, that Christ may be glorified in my life today. I go out to face life as a conqueror, as a victor in Jesus’ name, Amen.’
- There are times when you may have to prostrate yourself before God and declare, “I am nothing without you.” But as you go out to face life and its challenges each morning, go out as a child of God, with hope and courage that God is with you and is interested in your welfare. Internalize His words for you. Believe what He says about you and know that His presence is with you. Let His words direct your thoughts, your words and your actions throughout the day.

Mental Exercise

- Write a list of negative thoughts you are prone to think. For example: “*I am unlovable,*” “*I am ugly,*” “*I can’t do anything right,*” “*I am worthless.*”
- Now write and replace that negative script with a positive one. For instance: “*I am loved and cared for by God;*” “*I am beautiful/handsome, created in the image of God;*” and “*I am somebody, special and unique, God has given me talents and gifts.*”



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- Now take this positive script and let a close family, friend, or neighbour say it or read it to you.

May God bless you to this end is my prayer.