

March 2002: Identity Crisis

by Aaron Greenway

In whichever society we belong to, it is crystal clear that Satan is always at work. For the month of March, I wish to explore the ways he works within the body to pervert the way that Christians see themselves and God.

The first way the devil works is by convincing believers they are more than what they really are. As believers it is important that we see God for who He is, holy, perfect, etc. To see ourselves as sinners before a holy God is where God commands us to begin. Usually, we can spot this kind of attitude when we begin to compare ourselves to other people. A feeling of superiority comes over us and we think that we are “better” than Brother So-n-So.

Just recently, I caught myself praying, “Lord, I am too proud. Show me who I really am.” Within twenty four hours I found myself overwhelmed by the holiness of God and my own unworthiness and helplessness before Him. Such an experience is painful, but perhaps, we would be a lot more humble if we were willing to see that we are instruments of God’s grace, not because there is any intrinsic goodness in ourselves (I John 1:8, Romans 3:10-11).

However, the second lie the devil tries to put on us is exactly the opposite. Someone who has committed sin in his/her past can be constantly overwhelmed with feelings of condemnation. The Scripture says we are forgiven, but many of us live like we are still condemned (I John 1:9). The Scripture says we are righteous in the Father’s sight (Romans 3:22), and yet we still think of ourselves as hopelessly worthless. The Scripture says we are adopted children into the family of the King, and somehow we still live like paupers. The reason for this is that we have forgotten,

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again, who He is and who we really are (in Him!). We have forgotten that our worth has nothing to do with anything we deserve. Rather, it has everything to do with a God who has sovereignly chosen us. Whoever God deems worthy has worth. Whoever God declares righteous is righteous (through the Son). And quite frankly, the devil has nothing to say about it!

Ironically, these two groups of believers clash quite a lot. One believer believes himself to be superior to the brother who has "messed up." And the down-trodden Christian thinks he can never be used by God like Mr. Perfect Christian.

One of the greatest injustices that one believer can do to another is to make another Christian feel (through words, actions and attitudes) that they will never be accepted when God, when through the Son and the forgiveness He provides, God has already accepted them. Many times, we set up this impossible standard for others for no other reason than to "one-up" them OR to control them. This is nothing but Satan's scheme to cripple the church. He pumps the proud Christian full of arrogance, while he kicks the whipped Christian down in the dirt. All of this is nothing less than a mockery to God. It is basically calling God a liar. The proud Christian says he doesn't need God's righteousness because he has his own. The whipped Christian cannot accept God's righteousness because he doesn't believe it will help his feelings of self-condemnation.

Once we have been accepted by the Father, through His Son, Jesus, our slates have been whiped clean. Our lives are now being transformed. There is no room for arrogant boasting, or for any legalistic standard for another to meet when the standard was met at the cross 2000 years ago.

We will never find freedom by buying into either one of these lies. We must believe God for what He says and who He is: the JUST and also, the JUSTIFIER. This is where true freedom is. When we see this, we can turn our backs on the past and any word coming out of the mouth of the father of Lies.