

Intro

Bite

My personal relationship with God is best described by...

- ...a hamster running on a wheel (but I keep falling off)
- ...running from the cops
- ...we hang out every now and then
- ...I'm not sure; God feels distant or I don't think about Him much
- ...like a bush growing in garden

Eph 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ"

Praise be to God!

God's Criticalness and our Criticalness

"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

Before space-time existed God had you planned out and in His mind and is calling you to live a life that is holy and blameless.

What does holy and blameless before Him mean?

holy to be set separated out and be used for a special purpose

blameless without fault; spotless

1 Peter 1:14-16 "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Paul is saying: In light of you being chosen through Christ's death and resurrection God is calling you to a life that is separated out and consistent before God.

before Him gives the idea of looking into something in order to inspect it

God is constantly looking down into each person

- to see Christ's character in us
- not to see fault and nit pick our short comings

Restraint analogy:

- Friend recommends
- You set aside main course as special meal

- 2 ways you can expect the quality of the food
 - critical eye:
 - * there's always something wrong with the food and nothing is ever good enough
 - * expects people / things to live up to their standards
 - complimentary eye:
 - * "I can't wait to see the best of the chef"
 - * "I'm excited to taste it"
 - * Expects the best from others but has realistic expectations - standards are left to God
 - God can be disappointed in what we do but He is constantly looking for Christ in us.

When many of us hear the words "holy and blameless life" and feel that God is asking them to be perfect.

Some of us build up high standards for our life.

Seeing ourselves with a proper lens

But we mix up what God calls perfect with our own perceptions of what perfect is or means. We distort reality by setting standards for our selves and way higher than God ever intended.

There might be some of you that feel like you're never good enough or others aren't good enough. You may think to low of your self or to high. Both are forms of perfectionism.

Let's look at a few key truths that will help free you from having a critical attitude:

Adoption

First is to being seeing who you are in Christ.

Eph 1:4b-5a "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself"

- God says "everyone who is saved I love unconditionally and will be called my son/daughter and adopted into my family"

adoption your identity now belongs to God

Who you are right now is a child of the most High God and creator of the universe.

You are not the sum of your best and worst moments or experiences in life.

You are not your career

Eph 1:5b “According to the kind intention of His will”

NLT says :

This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure - Eph 1:5 (NLT)

God wanted to adopt you and not only that it put a huge grin on His face!

You are not an after thought to God! You are not a mistake!

Eph 1:6 “to the praise of the glory of His grace, which he has freely given us in the beloved”

Grace

The Second key is to begin grasping grace

grace favor shown to someone that is undeserved
doing something really good to someone when they deserve something
really bad to happen to them
something that can't be payed back (the scary part)

Some ways to grasp grace are:

- Be patient with people when they do something that irritates you or hurts you
- See people for who they are not what they do.
- (Might be the hardest) Allow other people to love on you *especially when you do something wrong*

Critical people have a hard time grasping grace - or worse: they reject it - because they always feel they have to prove themselves and their worth.

- I have to be smart - I always have to create the best solution the fastest or there is something wrong with me
- I have to be successful - I must win every time or there is something wrong with me
- I have to be friendly - I have to be complimented by everyone or there is something wrong with me
- I have to _____ or there is something wrong with me.

Ephesians 2:8-10 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

- Christians with a critical attitude are trying to earn God's favor without knowing it because they see their worth in what they do instead of who

they already are.

Redeemed

The second key is to understand that God has set you free from the power of sin.

Eph 1:7 “In Him we have redemption through His blood”

redeemed to buy out of the slave market and set free permanently

Elephants at a circus

- chained when they’re really young. At the time they cannot resist
- when the elephant gets much older and larger though they have the potential to break the chain they don’t because they still think it will hold them down.

Many of us who struggle with perfectionism were trained this way when they were really young. I know because I was abused as a child and grew up in a rough home.

- Begin to realize that if you submit yourself to God you will change into a person that you and others will love. (Because of how they see God in you). **YOU CAN BE FREE FROM PERFECTIONISM**
- Allow the Holy Spirit to bring to your memory areas of your life that need to change. For me this meant learning to address the pain of my past and admitting that I needed help and didn’t know how to fix myself.
- Don’t feel like you have to change overnight; don’t be a perfectionist about not being a perfectionist.

Forgiven

Eph 1:7b the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us."

Psalms 103:11-14

If you struggle with having a critical attitude say to yourself:

“I have nothing to prove. God showed me grace when I couldn’t be perfect by adopting me and forgiving me. It’s ok if I make a mistake right now. He loves me no matter what”

Forgiveness letting go of the wrong done to you or by you
changing how you feel about that person and being seeing them as God sees them.

- Make a conscious choice to forgive
- Be specific about what hurt you (or what you did wrong)
- Release that person from feelings of animosity and bitterness.

Application

1. Seek the scriptures about how God sees you.
2. Learn to show and accept grace from others
3. Open your life to the Holy Spirit so that you might start living out the freedom you already have
4. Continuously forgive those who have hurt you and yourself for things you've done wrong

To the unsaved

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

- God doesn't want any of us to perish and so He is patiently waiting for you to accept His free gift and life the exciting life that He intended for you to live.
- He will knock but He is not going to force you into coming to Him.

To the saved

Eph 4:1 "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"

- This is done by abstaining from sin and continuously confessing specific sins in your life and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind areas of your life that He needs to change and submitting them to Him on a moment by moment basis.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleans us from all unrighteousness"

- God is ready to forgive you from the sin you have committed, are committing, and may commit.

Jude 1:24 "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."