

Introduction

- A. The basic message of the Bible is: Christianity is powerful and it works.**
- B. So -- the question: "Why do I have such weakness and lack of fulfillment?"**
"Why, when I seem to be doing everything -- at least trying -- that my Christian life seems to hard, often unfulfilling and unfruitful?"
- C. We are complex people and there are many facets to be considered.**
- D. Wish to consider two BARRIERS TO WHOLENESS that may be helpful.**
- E. Scripture: Rom 12:1,2**

I. Our Sinful Self-Centeredness that Keeps Us From True Surrender to God.

- A. God created us Christ-centered.**
 - 1. All of our life was to revolve around Him.**
 - 2. He would be the object of our love and attention.**
 - 3. He would be the source/reason why we believed what we did.**
 - 4. He would be the source/reason why we did what we did.**
 - 5. He would be the goal of our thoughts and work -- bring glory, joy to Him.**

- B. The fall has made us self-centered.**
 - 1. Now all of our life revolves around ourselves.**
 - 2. We are the object of our love and attention.**
 - 3. We are the source/reason for what we believe -- our own authority.**
 - 4. We are the source/reason for why we do what we do.**
 - 5. We are the goal of our thoughts and work -- to bring attention to ourselves and to bring joy and pleasure to ourselves.**

- C. Our self-centered way of living is often hidden and masked by our Christian life**
 - 1. We give lip service to God -- but in hidden area -- we seek to be in control.**
 - 2. We profess to believe His Word -- but inside -- believe otherwise.**
 - 3. These not doctrinal areas -- but personal unbelief, goals, errors.**
 - 4. Illustrations:**
 - "I don't measure up." -- many other statements and belief like that.**
 - "I'm not going to give up my control." -- many such goals.**
 - "I'm going to get revenge." -- many such desires.**
 - "I'm going to make them pay." -- many such plans**
 - "I'm going to have my own way." -- many such objectives.**
 - "I'm going to hold God and spouse/others hostage." -- I'll not respond with love and ... until He or they do what I want them to do -- give me what I want/deserve.**

- (In all these ways we are not surrendered to God.)**
- D. God has made a provision for our self-centeredness -- it is death to self.**

1. Consider Romans 6:1-6 and 12:1,2
2. We must surrender to His Crucifixion to break the power of our sinful self-centeredness that robs us of love, joy, peace, etc., and produces bondage.
3. Only through such surrender can we be free to live -- Romans 6:16-18

Heavenly Father, I surrender _____ and my inner genuine self to You. I ask You to lay Your Cross upon me and upon my self-centeredness. I give up all demands that You and others would treat me in the self-centered way I have been demanding. I confess to You the way I have been pouting and irritated that You did not do what I wanted. I confess to You that I have placed too much emphasis upon my own satisfaction. I confess that I have tried to “use You” to get my own way. I confess to You that I have tried to get my spouse and others to serve me and make me happy. I confess that I have wanted to control You, my spouse, and others. Please come and lead me into the Death of the Cross -- so I can be free to surrender to You.

II. Our Sinful Acceptance of the Authority of our Emotions.

- A. In the Fall we were nearly destroyed in our external and internal relationships.
 1. We transferred the authority from God to ourselves. (Consider how serious)
 2. We transferred the source of the authority (to do what is right) on the inside, from our mind (knowing what to do from the Bible), to our attentions (feeling what is right and what we want to do -- even though we know it's wrong.)
- B. Now, today, we are largely controlled by our emotions -- not the Bible.
 1. Manifestations of disapproval -- even over smallest matters
(Standing in the place of the person in the restaurant)
 2. Manifestations of rejection -- refusal to accept -- criticism of ...
(Man in Bible class looking at his watch --tape recorder)
 3. Manifestations of grudges, seeking revenge, holding people hostage.
(Choice to treat library man with his own jokes)
 4. Plans to have our own way -- get what we want -- control situation/people.
(Planning on using Psalm 136 to stop a person's criticism.)
 5. Plan a reply to get back at people.
(Keeping a letter and waiting for a crucial time.)
- C. We must bring ourselves and our emotions into surrender to God and His Word.

(Use handout: *Uncovering that Internal Slave-Master -- Our Emotions.*)

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