FINDING FREEDOM

Devotional - Finding Peace

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. John 14:27

Read the above scripture out loud. I want you to listen to the words as you are speaking them. Listen like it is God speaking these words to you.

Write down a situation or circumstance that is causing your heart to be troubled or fearful. If one doesn't come to mind right away, pause and ask the Holy Spirit to show you a situation from your recent past.

When we become troubled or fearful, we have likely lost touch with the Truth that we have an unconditionally loving, all-powerful Heavenly Father. In these times, you are in what I call a faith fight. We must contend with our carnal thoughts and fight to anchor ourselves in God's Truths regarding our situation. We win our faith fights through prayer.

I want you to pray the following prayer out loud. I don't want you just to read it. I want you to do your best to make these words your heartfelt words to God. To do this, I suggest you first read over the prayer silently to familiarize yourself with how the prayer goes. Then pause, still your heart before God, and speak these words out loud to Him from your heart.

Father, I ask you to forgive me for not trusting you with this situation. I confess that I have tried to handle this situation on my own, and I have not turned to you. I renounce the lie that You are not with me or for me. The Truth is that You will never leave me or forsake me. Heavenly Father, I declare that You are my protector and my provider, and with You I can do all things. I invite You to help me walk this situation out and show me Your perspective of my problem.

Pause after praying and write down anything you sense God is shows you or even says to you.

Stop and reflect…does your heart feel more at peace than before you prayed? It may be barely noticeable, but just beginning to turn to God and pray begins to open the door for His peace to invade our hearts. Keep turning to Him and open your heart and receive His peace.

FINDING FREEDOM

Devotional - Blame

I have considered my ways, and have turned my steps to your statutes. Psalm 119:59

When problems arise, how quick are you to blame others? Are you one to say, "They made me mad"? Do you take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, and actions? I realize this is a really big shift for some of you, and I will admit, it is definitely not always easy for me either. However, if you really want to find freedom in a situation, taking responsibility is a must!

The word "consider" in Psalm 119:59 simply means to think carefully about. So, what did the Psalmist think carefully about? His own ways! Notice what the Psalmist *didn't* say in this verse. He didn't say, "I have considered the ways of others" or " I have considered how bad my situation is." Nor did he say, "I have considered what God hasn't done for me."

Take a moment to think carefully about how you tend to respond when you get offended by someone or when situations get difficult. Who or what do you tend to blame?

We all have patterns of thinking. Some patterns are helpful, and others… not so much. When we live in a pattern of blaming others, which at times includes God, we assume the role of the victim and assign the role of the villain to others! When we fall into this trap, just like you, I can wrongly come to the conclusion that I am innocent and have done nothing wrong. The truth is, I have often thought some very unloving thoughts and possibly said, or did, some hurtful things. Do you tend to fall into this pattern of seeing others as villains and yourself as an innocent victim? I call this pattern of thinking the "blame game."

Before we can begin to experience significant breakthroughs in our lives, we must recognize and accept what we are responsible for. Here is the great news, you can begin to turn the tide right now and ask God to help you break through your "blame game" pattern of thinking!

Here is a simple prayer that follows the Finding Freedom prayer model to help get you started. Like I suggested in the previous devotional, I suggest you read the prayer through once silently and then pray this prayer out loud to God. As you are praying the prayer, if you feel the Spirit leading you in a certain direction, by all means, follow the Spirit and then come back to the scripted prayer.

Father, forgive me for blaming others when I get angry or offended. Forgive me for focusing solely on them and not taking responsibility for the ways I've contributed to the situation. I ask you to forgive me for my desire to retaliate when I get hurt.

Lord, I renounce the lie that I am a completely innocent victim. I renounce the lie that I am not to blame. I renounce the lie that I have the right to hurt those who have hurt me.

Father, I forgive the person who hurt and offended me. I forgive them for..(what specifically did they say or do that hurt / offended you)

Lord, I rebuke the victim spirit right now in Jesus' mighty name. I break and release the retaliatory spirit in the name of Jesus. Lord, close every door to the kingdom of darkness that I have opened in this area of my life.

Holy Spirit, prompt me to reflect upon my ways when I am hurt or offended. Help me to see the destruction that my thoughts, feelings, and actions have on others as well as myself. Father, I pray that you would fill my heart with compassion and mercy for those who hurt or offend me.