

Accepted, Affirmed and Approved

Dear Co-Worker,

Do you feel rage, anger, shame or worthlessness? Then maybe the five A's are missing from your life. These are: attention, acceptance, approval, admiration and affirmation. The lack of these A's increases the likelihood of rage, anger, shame and worthlessness. Some are on the brink of emotional starvation because they have difficulty accepting the gifts of attention, approval, acceptance, admiration and affection from anyone.

Healing can be found in the Word of God. There we find we are accepted because we belong to the family of God. "To those who believed in His name (Jesus), He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12,13).

People who feel unaffirmed or unaccepted become strong-willed. The more unaccepted a person feels, the more he or she develops a willfulness to maintain control and keep from being hurt. The people who feel affirmed and accepted are flexible, receptive, willing and cooperative. The people who feel unaffirmed and unaccepted strive for affirmation from others. They become willful wrestlers who often resist and usually question blessings and affirmations when they do take place. Striving and resisting will continue to be survival tactics until one actually believes and accepts 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." To drive home this message of how we are affirmed, accepted and approved through Christ, Peter quotes Deut. 7:6 to New Testament believers: "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth." Begin to live a life of affirmation and blessing. Accept God at His word when He says, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you: I have called you by your name; you are Mine" (Is. 43:1).

Believing that one is accepted by God through the grace of God demonstrated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ enables us to move into the reality of freedom. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal.5:1). The slavery to drugs, alcohol, and other addictions is broken because the love of Christ sets one free. "Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise" (Prov. 20:1).

It is time to wise up and see how destructive the addictions of the world are. Paul wants us to see the attention, approval and admiration that are provided for us through Christ that far exceeds anything the world has to offer. In Romans 8 we discover that

because of Jesus we are free from condemnation (Rom 8:1). We see that we are joint heirs with Christ in Romans 8:17: Then in Romans 8:37-39 we discover that we are more than conquerors and that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

For those who hate the waiting when it comes to experiencing the blessing that Christ provides in the midst of adversity, we are reminded in Ps. 27:14 “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Then in Is. 40:31 we are told that “those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.” We must not forget that what we consider the worst is often the last stage of God’s preparation for our best. Life is either awfully simply or simply awful. It depends on whether or not we choose to believe that in Christ we receive the attention, acceptance, approval, admiration and affirmation that we hunger for.

Through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we have been provided blessings beyond measure. By the power of His blood, peace has been made between us and God (Col.1:20). By its power there is forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all of us who put our faith in Jesus (Col. 1:14 and John 6:54). Through his shed blood, Satan is overcome (Rev. 12:11).

Christ is risen and we have been forgiven and accepted as a new creation in Christ Jesus (2Cor. 5:17). Now we are candles lit by God and sent forth to share His love in a hurting world. As Matt. 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men and women that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” You have the purpose of being Christ’s hands in the world, for you are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-15). We are called to help others (Matt. 25:31-46); for we have been given a mission and assured that we are not alone as we work to fulfill it. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Abraham knew that God was with him always and that is why he was willing to surrender even his only son Isaac. The adventure of faith is surrendering our control of that which we were never meant to control. Abraham really believed that God would intervene as Abraham prepared to offer his only son. When we trust that which is closest to us to the Lord, we can be sure He will provide a way through our difficulties. Our complete surrender to God is our declaration that we believe that in Him we find the attention, acceptance, approval, admiration, and affirmation that our heart desires. We find fulfillment and purpose because Jesus Christ has provided it for us on the cross. Jesus is the Lord of radical intervention who has taken the total burden of our sins, failure and need for the five A’s. Not only does God step in to provide Jesus as the ram in the thicket, but He has also given us the Lamb of God who has taken our sins upon Himself. Jesus, the Lamb of God, died for our sins and then His resurrection which followed clearly demonstrates that He will resurrect all the impossibilities we surrender to Him. As a result, we are free to live with a sense of expectancy that He will intervene victoriously at just the right time in everything we commit to Him. Paul declared in Phil.

3:7, 8, “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.”

Knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord provides the assurance He will move heaven and earth to accomplish His purpose in us and through us. “So is My Word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Is. 55:11). It is time we evict the victim mentality and see ourselves as victors through Christ. “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” (Is. 60:1). Our loving, living Lord has provided His attention, acceptance, approval, admiration, and affirmation that the world cannot give and it cannot take away. Hear, believe and receive His word to you this day. “I know the plans I have for you, declared the Lord, plans to prosper you (grant you victory and fulfillment) and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jer. 29:11).

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice