

What Blocks God's Provision in Your Life?

Have you found yourself repeating the same wrong action over and over again even when you thought you dealt with the cause and vowed you would never repeat it?

When asked why we do what we do, we honestly don't know. If we cannot get in touch with the why of our action, then we will never be able to find a permanent solution.

The action, the wrong, hurtful thing that we keep doing is just a symptom of a deeper problem. It is the part that shows we have an underlying attitude that is causing our visible sin.

People look at others that do what they consider a sin and judge the action. While we certainly should behave in appropriate ways, the problem of sin goes much deeper than what people see. We often treat our sin like the person who has a dandelion problem in his front yard and gets rid of the evidence by mowing the lawn. He gets rid of the yellow but the problem keeps coming back and in fact it even spreads to other areas of the lawn.

The dandelion problem goes much deeper than what we can see. If you have ever tried to get to the root of a dandelion, you know that their roots go deep and are tenacious so much so that if you even leave a little of the root the problem will come back.

If we are going to get rid of our sinful actions, we must look deeper than the action to see what is motivating what we do.

On this level many people see that fear, worry, and feelings of inadequacy are often there. They may try to treat the problem of fear and worry with positive confessions. Thinking

positively is very important and negative thinking definitely creates many problems in our life, but this is not the full root of our problem.

We all struggle with feelings of not being adequate for a task at hand. We may not like the way we look or be afraid of awkward situations. Everyone struggles in some way with their feeling of 'being enough' for the people in their lives or the task set before them. We may read all kinds of leadership or self-help books in an effort to boost our confidence. We may shop at the finest stores and study fashion magazines, diet constantly to try to get ourselves to look more like what we think is 'good enough,' yet somehow we always fall short of ours and others' expectation.

If we try to deal with our motivational sins at this level, we will fail just like we fail to correct the dandelion problem by digging down a ways to get the root only to have it break off a little short. Let's go deeper. What causes us to be afraid, worry or feel that we are not adequate?

In 1 John 2:15 John states "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world."

John narrows all of sin to three categories,

1. Lust of the flesh or immorality, (not just sexual immorality but any time we allow our flesh to dictate our actions),
2. Lust of the eyes or greed and
3. Pride of life or self-willed living (insisting we get our way).

These three sins create all our problems in life. We often treat this level by denying our flesh, creating rules to keep our flesh in line, and false humility or religious living.

Denying our flesh can have positive results and we definitely need rules to help keep our flesh in line. And honestly, there is nothing wrong with expressions of humility or living a religious life, if in fact it is genuine, but that is where we seem to fall short.

How do we make all that we do genuinely from our heart and not just something we are doing to try to be right inside?

It appears we have not yet reached the root of our dandelion. Dealing with our sin at this level will just cause it to return and although we may mow frequently to keep the bloom from showing the root is still there.

So what is the root? Hebrews 12:15 tells us "See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springs up and causes us to become defiled."

Bitterness is the root? You may say, "I don't feel bitter at anyone", yet when we look deeper at why we keep doing the same wrong thing over and over again we find that it comes back to the fact that we are trying to get something for ourselves that we think has been denied to us whether that is appreciation, security, value, or whatever.

I recently was struggling with an emotion that I had tried to control with Scripture, positive thinking and all sorts of other methods with no success. I finally came to realize that the emotion I was struggling with was a need I had. I needed something that I did not have. I needed this and I was not getting it.

Why was God blocking the provision of this need in my life?

Finally in desperation one day I cried out, "Oh God, I wish I did not need this. If I did not need this, then it would not matter that the need was not filled." God responded within me by saying, "Yes, that is exactly what I want to work inside of

you.”

Now I want to tell you that what I was struggling with was feelings of not being appreciated or valued by those I served.

This is a genuine human need and one that others that we serve should meet. It is normal to expect appreciation and value when we serve others, yet God wanted me to release my expectation of this very normal response. He went on to teach me that whenever we face problems in life that He allows them in order to show us areas in our life where we are giving in to the ‘lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or the pride of life’ so that we can instead release that to receive grace.

All of us have two sides of our life, the side filled with what God has blessed us with and the side filled with what has been taken from us or denied to us. When we are hurt or unhappy, it is because something we had or thought we had is taken from us. This may be a relationship, a belonging, or trust.

We respond by looking at what was taken from us, dwelling on the hurt, rehearsing the words said or action done over and over in our mind, fixating on it. We are looking longingly on that side of life filled with what we cannot have and we become bitter and angry. We may say, “I am not bitter, I am hurt.”

Being hurt is not being bitter, it is true, but hurts heal and when a reasonable time passes and you are not healed, then you have allowed that hurt to turn into bitterness and this bitterness will defile your entire life.

What are you to do?

The Scripture says that we have ‘missed the grace of God’.

The grace of God is located only on the side of life that contains what we have been blessed with. We miss God’s grace

when we have turned our back to look on the side of life containing what we cannot have.

The more we look on what we do not have the more ungrateful we become and unable to see what we have been blessed with. We become fearful that even more will be taken from us, we worry about what might happen, we see ourselves as depleted, and we react by grasping greedily or moaning morosely. We are miserable and never seem to have a sense of peace and happiness. What can we do?

Turn around!

Begin focusing again on what God has blessed you with. He has blessed you abundantly.

You don't have a body of a model? Thank God! You don't have her problems either. You at least have a body and it works! Thank God!

You have lost a loved one? Thank God you still have loved ones left. Focus on them. We don't thank God because bad things happen to us, we thank God that He has left good things behind.

So what is your focus?

Next time you are depressed, angry, or in a foul mood reflect on this and you will find that you are focusing on the wrong side of life.

Turn around!

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