

Why We Choose to Believe Satan's Life-Threatening Lies

I recently wrote a poem as a thank you to a group of people who blessed me with words of encouragement and flowers. I didn't understand at that time how so many people could love me and, yet still I could feel so unloved and in despair. You have probably gone through the same thing at one point or time.

How is it that people can encourage us, speak life into us, tell us the positive things that they see in us but we still not believe them?

We often can't see the positive others see in us.

When I should have been feeling blessed and uplifted, in my heart, I said, "Thanks, but I don't believe you." I was stuck in self-condemnation and self-loathing. Then I started condemning myself for being in self-condemnation. "I should know I am loved. People just told me why they love me, and showed me how much they appreciate me. If this isn't enough, I'll just need more and more each time I am in despair." This is a common strategy Satan uses against women.

In the middle of December, someone challenged me to ask God what my new name was; what He calls me. So I did this one night. A little uneasy, but also anticipatory for the response, I asked God what He calls me.

"Beloved."

It came so quickly I thought it must be a fluke, or my humanness getting in the way. My own name, Tesia, means "Loved by God." So I thought, "God, You love me. I know You love me. What is my real new name?"

Silence.

He calls me by my name, not by my shame. He calls me "Beloved—Dearly Loved, Darling, Dearest, Precious, Adored, Much Loved, Treasured, Prized, Highly Regarded, Admired."

Having an inaccurate view of yourself leads to danger and, ultimately, destruction.

I often struggle with knowing how to properly love myself in the love of God. This is because as women, we often need healing at a deeper level than just the surface. The truth is, the love of others will never be enough if I myself don't believe that I am lovable, if I don't believe that I am truly loved by God. Doubt is at the root of this problem. I don't see "me" the way God sees "me."

"Authentic faith is not merely believing *in* God. It is *believing* God." —Art Azurdia

I once believed the lie that the cross only covered my past sins, not my present and future sins as well. I believed that perfection was required of me. I believed the lie that sanctification is my responsibility. The truth is that it is not my responsibility but the Holy Spirit's. I simply must yield to Him.

I believed that once God had given me an awareness of what needed to change that I must do all the work and change myself. This is a lie. The lie is that faith is something I produce, not a gift from God.

When we believe this lie, we are still operating in performance-based love. We are still trying to "do" in order to be worthy of receiving the love of Christ. As women, it is common that we have an unrealistic, perfection expectation of ourselves. Our expectation of perfection sets us up for failure. It sets the stage for self-condemnation.

A lifetime of self-loathing won't be undone overnight.

Self-condemnation is a master of espionage; inserting lies disguised as my own thoughts. She magnifies my faults and failures. Even when I hit the mark I'm aiming for, self-condemnation helps me find a reason I'm not good enough in another area. She tells me I'm a constant failure no matter how hard I try; seeing only what I lack and never celebrating what I have. I am sure you must have had time with this companion as well.

I believed her. Those beliefs took root in my heart and became entwined and entangled in my identity. Self-condemnation became a familiar friend. I thought she was fighting for the good side and part of my sanctification. All the while, I did not know she was a double agent whose loyalties lay with the enemy.

By believing self-condemnation instead of God, I put ammunition in the enemy's hand. Worse than that, I pulled the trigger myself. He didn't have to do any of the work. The devil just sent self-condemnation with the gun of doubt. I've got plenty of bullets to shoot myself with. Plenty of reasons why I'm a failure, why I'm not good enough, why no one should love me. "I did good, but I could have done better." "I wish I didn't ..." "I should have ..." "I need to ..."

By believing self-condemnation, instead of crying out to God, I'm saying, "Thanks God for telling me I am righteous, redeemed, loved, worthy, blameless in Your sight, and pure, but I don't believe You."

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

The Lord *desires* to forgive me. He instigates settling the matter. How is condemning myself for my own sin in any way

pleasing to God? Does He delight in me when I am beating myself up over something He has already forgiven me for? Who am I to say I am unforgiven and unlovable when the very God who spoke creation into existence says I am forgiven and loved?

Awareness is the first step in sanctification, but I can't stop there. I have to go all the way to repentance and surrender. I must admit (and accept) that I am imperfect and have been condemning myself. I must repent of coming into agreement with the devil by believing these lies about myself. And then I must surrender it at Jesus' feet, leave it there and ask Him to come and be Lord of my life again. Lord of my mind, thoughts, beliefs and feelings. I must ask Him to help my unbelief and believe I am who He says I am. Believe He is who He says He is.

Alongside self-condemnation, doubt is rooted. Both deeply enmeshed in the garden of my heart. Several days ago, I was still stuck in the first half of that poem I mentioned above. I was so afraid for Jesus to fully invade and take control. I was so afraid that if I trusted Him with my healing and my heart—totally and completely—I would be hurt; I would receive pain. I believed that I wouldn't be healed. I doubted that He is the God of miracles and that He wants to heal me.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4-5).

It is because of His great love for me that he wants to heal me. Because I have given my life to Jesus, he loves me even with all my imperfections.

The real question is, do I love me? If I were to never change one more thing for the rest of my life, but stay exactly as imperfect as I am, do I love me? Jesus loved me long before I

was in this condition moving towards greater sanctification day by day. He loved me while I was still His enemy. The Bible says in Romans 5:8 and 5:10 "But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ... in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us... For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life."

Today I choose to reject self-condemnation and doubt. I reject perfectionism. I challenge you to do the same.

I cannot boast in God's saving grace if I expect myself to reach a place in which I don't need saving. I trust that Jesus will uproot all the doubt and deceit in my heart. I have faith He will heal my brokenness. I believe I am exactly who God wants me to be at this very moment. I am a child of God. I rest in His loving arms and I cry, "Abba, Father." I make a choice to say to God "Thanks, and I do believe You." {eoa}

Tesia Miller is a writer and the founder of . Her ministry is to help people who are in need of freedom and deliverance to see that they can experience it through Jesus Christ. She encourages people to see that there is a way out of hopelessness and that life really can be beauty-full because of Jesus. She also ministers at Kingdom Enterprises, an evangelism ministry in Tucson, Arizona.