

Your Emotional Health: Good Fruit or Bad Root?

Are you emotionally healthy? It seems as though a lot of people aren't, and I used to be one of them.

Because I grew up in a very unstable, angry atmosphere and was abused by my father for years, I became a miserable, angry, controlling adult and didn't know how to have healthy relationships. And until I learned how to grow in my relationship with Christ, I was a mess in my soul.

Many people have wounds in their soul because of things that have happened to them. They've been abused or mistreated, and it's caused them to have a victim mentality, to get stuck in self-pity, to have an out-of-control temper or a constant sense of insecurity and so on. When we have unhealthy emotions, and the bad behavior that comes as a result, we have to get to the root of the issue to fix it.

Matthew 12:33 (NLT) says, "A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad." In other words, where there's rotten fruit, there's a rotten root.

I remember years ago, when I would complain to Dave, saying, "We don't talk about anything!" Finally, one day Dave said to me, "You know, Joyce, we don't talk. You talk, and you want me to listen and agree with you." He was right. Whenever I would share an opinion about something with Dave, if he didn't agree with me, the fight was on.

We would get into these big arguments, and I would end up so confused, thinking, *I don't even know what we're talking about anymore*. The really frustrating thing was I didn't understand what my problem was, so I just kept blaming it all on Dave.

When we don't take responsibility for our problems, we blame them on someone or something else. But when I finally got to the point where I was sick and tired of arguing with Dave all the time, I prayed for God to show me what was wrong. He answered my prayer and revealed that I had a root of rejection in my soul from the way I was raised, and until that root was dealt with, the fruit (or behavior) in my life would never change.

When you're afraid of rejection, if people don't agree with you, you feel rejected by them. So when Dave and I were trying to have a conversation, if he didn't agree with me, I felt he was rejecting me.

The truth is when Dave had a different opinion, he wasn't rejecting me; he was rejecting my opinion. And I had to learn to separate who I am from my opinion and trust that whether or not he liked my opinion, he still loved me.

It was a major breakthrough for me to get this revelation. Through this situation, I learned how to be a person who is loved and valued by God because of what Jesus has done for me and to separate my "who" from my "do." It took some time, and I had to be determined to trust God's Word, which says He loves me unconditionally and nothing can separate me from His love; but eventually, I became secure in knowing who I am in Christ.

I want to ask you again: Are you emotionally healthy? Are you dealing with a root of rejection in your life? Is there a person in your life you can't talk to without getting upset or losing your temper? When someone disagrees with you, does it make you feel insulted, stupid, rejected or disrespected? If this is you, then you need to know God doesn't want you to live this way.

In Ephesians 3, the apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I

pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (vv. 17-19, NIV).

This is my prayer for you—that you would be planted deep in the knowledge that God loves you unconditionally and know that, while He may not always love everything you do, He always loves you. I also want to encourage you to spend time every day alone with God in prayer and study the Word. Dig in to Scriptures about the love of God, and choose to trust that every one of those promises is for you.

The truth is: You are loved, and you are valuable to God!
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