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God's Process For Life Change
"Taking A Life Inventory"
(Part 4)

Intro: When we leased this facility 5 years ago, we didn't automatically begin work. We first took some time to take an inventory of the facility. What were the needs / the problems / the areas that needed attention. (There were many!) The game plan for transforming the building started with an inventory. It works this way with our lives as well. Too many people get all fired up about making changes in their life without doing any type of inventory so they know where to begin. In the past 3 weeks, we have laid the foundation for this. (Given God ownership) Now, there is some work that is required of us. We need to get on the same page with God in order to move ahead. This was King David's prayer.

Ps. 139:23-24 "Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." (NLT)

- He is asking God to help him see his life from God's perspective. Most people never do this. It takes some courage...but it leads to life. Let's be willing to take this step. It can be painful; yes, but God is not here to condemn us. He's here to heal us.

I. What Is A Life Inventory

Moral assessment of my life? The word moral = truthful / And we need God's help to be truthful about our lives. Nothing is going to change without a truthful inventory. God invites us to do this with Him!

Is. 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together", says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..." (NIV) Let's sit down and think through this together so I can transform you!

How do I do this? M.O.R.A.L. Acronym

A. Make Time

1. This process takes time. We have to set aside some significant amounts of time in order to do this. (A day / a weekend / several hours / must be alone – this is not a group project. – Get something to write with
2. It's easy to say, "I just don't have time for this!" Then you don't have time for your life to change. You will stay where you're at. Get used to the view, because it's not going to change.

B. Open Up

- This refers to being willing to open up your feelings. We are going to stop living in denial of how we really feel. We're all very good at living in emotional denial. (Oh, it doesn't really bother me...offend me...wasn't so bad...I've moved past it...) 4 questions.
1. What do I feel guilty about? – we're great at covering up our guilt. I thought God doesn't want me to feel guilty? We'll talk about good and bad guilt in a bit.
 2. What / Who do I resent? There may be people currently or in your past / institutions – employment...even churches
 3. What are my fears? What am I afraid of? What's causing me to lose sleep every night?
 4. Am I trapped in self-pity? Am I using what others have done to me as an excuse for where I'm at in life?

C. Rely on Jesus

1. When our knees are knocking it always helps to kneel on them! Please understand this is a spiritual process not a mechanical one. We must go through all these steps prayerfully.
2. Jesus doesn't ask you to do this yourself or in your own strength. Give this process to Him and move forward.

D. Analyze your past honestly

1. We can no longer live in denial of our past. We must face it honestly. Many people are quick to say; "I've put the past behind me." Unfortunately, our past doesn't stay there.
2. Our past has a way of sticking to us. It has a way of following us into the future and effecting the present. Often what a phrase like, "I've put the past behind me" means is that I've chosen to ignore it. That is just an invitation for our past to join us in the future.

E. List events from your past

Lam. 3:40 "Let us examine our ways and test them."

1. This is basically a written list of the events of your past...both good and bad. It's important to balance both! Seeing your past in print brings you face to face with the reality of your character. Not every detail, but major events / decisions / life choices / good and painful experiences.
2. Don't use this step to beat yourself up. This is not what it's for! It's to give you an accurate picture. It's allowing you to see the whole.

- Now it's time for step #2. We're going to get even more specific about our past.

II. Taking Inventory About My Past

- Why are we doing this? My past doesn't matter anymore. Is that true? Our past matters greatly. I am who I am today because of my past! How we deal with the past is what impacts and molds our lives.
- God knows that memory is powerful. This is why over and over in Scripture we are commanded to remember. *Ps. 105:5 "Remember His wonders which He has done..."* (NASB) Memory of the past can be good or it can be bondage. It matters!
- (Lion King clip)
 - A. List the people / things you resent or fear
 1. There is a proper time to name, names. This is it. Not to other people, but before God. Are there people we resent...people we fear...people who have wounded us deeply. List them!
 2. We can't be free from those who hurt us until we acknowledge them first.
 - B. List the actions
 1. List the specific actions someone did that hurt you. After we list the names, we list the specific actions.
 2. Could have been your parents (none supportive / abandoned / never accepted) Issues of betrayal / abuse / injustice / lied to or lied about /
 - C. List the effect / damage done to you (What did these actions produce?)
 1. How have you suffered / impacted socially? What do you mean? Emotional wounds affect us socially – relationally. They can hinder us from intimacy / trusting others / cause us to always be self-protecting – wear masks / lead to broken relationships / sabotage your own relationships
 2. How has your security been threatened or damaged? Was your physical safety threatened / Ever face financial loss because of someone else?
 3. Have you been wounded sexually? Are you a victim of sexual abuse so that you struggle with intimacy and trust in relationships?
 - Many Christians have trouble with this step. They spiritualize their feelings / hurts / wounds. David didn't!
 - *Ps. 69:3,28 "I am exhausted from crying for help...my eyes are swollen from weeping, waiting for my God to help me...Erase their names from the book of life..."* (NLT) Believers have a hard time getting in touch with pain.
 - D. List your part
 1. What do you mean MY PART? I was a victim to many of these things. I didn't do anything to deserve being wounded! That is true. BUT, once a

wounding has taken place, what I choose to do with that wound is MY PART!

2. I can choose to hang on to it / choose to let it destroy me / choose to be bitter / choose to live in self-pity / This is where I get very honest with what I have done with these wounds.
3. Time doesn't heal all wounds and all wounding doesn't make us better. It's what we choose to do with our wounding that makes a difference.

III. Taking Inventory Spiritually

Eph. 5:8 "For you were formally darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light." (NASB) Are we living like children of light / citizens of God's Kingdom?

A. Relationships with others

I John 4:20-21 "...if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God whom we have not seen?" (NLT) The horizontal impacts the vertical!

1. Who has hurt you? (You already have a list!)
2. Who are you holding a grudge against? Be honest! Don't spiritualize this!
3. Who do you seek revenge against? Are you doing things to hopefully cause some pain or discomfort? Choosing to ignore someone is a form of revenge! / Gossip / slander = revenge
4. Who are you jealous of? Does someone's success bother you / possessions / position or title /
5. Who have you been critical about / gossiped about? / Do you have a critical spirit aimed at someone?
6. Have you tried to justify your bad attitude by saying it's "their fault"?

B. Priorities in your life

Matt. 6:33 ""He will give you everything you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern." (NLT)

1. What are the areas of your life where you are you not putting God first? (marriage / job / finances / parenting / goals /
2. What is interfering with doing God's will?
 - Your ambition / your pleasures / your selfishness / past / guilt / fear
3. What have been your priorities? What are the priorities you currently live? Should be evidence. (time and money reveal priorities)
4. How have your priorities affected others? For example: If your priority has been your job, how has this affected your family?
5. What's good about them? What's not? Not every priority is wrong. Balance!

C. Your attitudes

Phil. 2:5 "Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had." (NLT)

1. Humility Vs Pride
2. Grateful Vs Ungrateful
3. Anger towards people Vs Compassion / Patience
4. Sarcasm Vs Sweetness
5. Faith and Trust Vs Fear and Anxiety

D. Your integrity

Col. 3:9 "Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature..." (NLT) Transformed lives are those committed to being truthful.

1. In your past dealings, have you been honest? Are you an honest person?
Will you lie in order to protect yourself or benefit yourself?
2. Have you stolen things? Lied on your taxes to get more money back or pay less? What did you do with the money when the cashier gave you too much money back?
3. Have you exaggerated yourself to make yourself look better? Exaggerated your accomplishments / your skills / your resume /
4. Have you pretended to live in a way in front of Christian friends and live another way at home or at work? This is the #1 faith killer in our children. This is what keeps our faith from transferring. Our integrity. Are we the same people at home? Our kids are watching!

- You're thinking...Good grief, this is depressing! What do I do with all this now?

IV. What To Do With These Inventories

A. Confess to God

1 John 1:8-9 "If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from everything wrong." (NLT)

1. You can use this inventory to beat yourself up or move you forward into the Life change God has in store for you. Confession gives us hope not lead us down the road to despair.
2. This life inventory should drive us to God. We now know what things we need to confess to God, what specific areas need to be transformed by God grace. We stop making excuses for our attitudes / behaviors / for our life and confess we have chosen sinful directions.
3. Too many people look at confession as a negative / depressing thing instead of a positive / life changing activity. Confession is not about groveling and guilt, it is about freedom and transformation
4. People confuse godly conviction with destructive condemnation. Explain

B. Confess to a trusted friend.

James 5:16 “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed...” (NLT)

1. Life change does not happen in isolation. But why would God want me to tell someone else my pain / wounds / failures. Because we all have a very deep need to be fully known and be fully loved.
2. This is one of the most life changing experiences we can have. Having people love us even though they know all about us. WOW! No secrets. Can you imagine? It's liberating. It's healing.
3. Our wounds and failures cause us to live in the shadows. They cause us to hide from God and others. When we confess to God and another person, it moves our lives into the Light where they can be healed.
4. It also gives this other person the opportunity to pray for your transformation. We all have a responsibility to pray for the life change in each other. “Pray that you may be healed”
5. I believe you can find relationships like this here because this is the kind of church God has called us to become. A church all about Life-Change.

There's a lot of work ahead...but it's worth it! Will you receive this challenge? Will you take a life inventory? Take inventory about your past / a spiritual inventory /