

Rest Button: Removing your limitations in 2018

1/7/18

Ephesians 4:1**Intro**

As a kid in my teenage years I grew up volunteering at Camp Harlow a Christian camp for kids.

They were always looking to expand the fun things that they had for kids to do while they were at camp. One year they bought go- carts, and made a track for them.

When these go-carts arrived, they were seriously awesome, as they had tons of power and were low profile. So you could spin out doing cookies, power slide, drift, etc. I spent hour's literally burning rubber. When the people in charge started seeing how fast we were going through tires, they did a terrible thing.

They put a governor on the motor, and throttled it way down. This limited the power to the engine and took at the guts out of it. The glorious machine built for speed and power slides and racing was now destined to live a super lame, slow, boring life. Sheepishly drive kids around a circle.

I feel like for many of us at some point a governor got installed on our lives. This thing that pressed down, and limits the potential of all that God created us to be: exchanging our destinies for an existence that is boring and safe.

Transition

Over the last few months, in my own life I have had a concentrated effort to try to remove the things in my life that are limiting me from becoming all that God wants me to be. Today I am going to look at a few of the limitations that God pointed out in my life that I am in the process of working on removing.

This starts with a conviction, that God has called each of us to great things in the kingdom of God, and that we are not currently living out our full potential. So we start with a commitment.

A. Don't settle for anything less than who God made you to be.

"Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God." Ephesians 4:1

Our lives will naturally take the path of least resistance.

This is true everywhere. When water flows it takes the path of least resistance. When gravity pulls it moves things in the direction of least resistance. And the same can be true of our lives, our lives can end up being the result of a series of the easiest choices to make.

However, the deepest calling in your life will never be the result of easy choices. Becoming who God created us to be is a result of hard work fighting against the easiest path. God did not wiring us to be deeply satisfied by anything that comes easily.

How do we do this?

1) Get in the right environment

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Becoming who God created you to be will not happen in the wrong environment.

This is the parable Jesus told about the sower. A farmer went out to sow seeds. Some seeds fell on rocky soil, some on the path, some surrounded by weeds, and some on the good soil. The good soil produced 100 times what the seed had in it.

What was the difference in the result? The difference was not in the seed (each seed contained everything it needed to become what it was created to be). The difference was in the environment in which the seed fell.

You cannot become everything God created you to become if you are in the wrong environment.

I will not become everything Jesus meant me to become if I am in the wrong environment. So let's assess environment of our lives.

Who are my mentors? Who am I listening to? Who is speaking into my life? Assess the voices you listen to.

Who are my friends? Do they encourage me to become everything God wants me to be? Do they inspire me? Is there freedom?

What about my spiritual environment? Am I reading the bible? Am I connecting with the heart of Jesus? Am I listening to his voice?

Do I set aside time to pursue my calling? Do I have time for the things that matter in life? Or is my environment defined by distractions with social media and screens?

We can't control everything about our environment. But find the things you can change and change them.

2) **Work hard at your calling**

And if you don't know what that is . . . work hard at discovering your calling.

Phil 3:12-14

¹²I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. ¹³No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it,¹⁴ but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

If you are still alive, your calling is still in front of you, not behind you. Discovering your calling and living your calling is not just for the young!

One of my big realizations was that my life was being consumed by things that were not in line with my calling.

What do I mean? The biggest example for me was social networking technology. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Email, texting, etc. The technology that is meant to connect us. All of these things, while they offer some good in life had taken over enough time and energy, I was trading in the fullness of what God had called me to for these things.

We trick ourselves into thinking these things are free, because they say "free" in the app store. But the real cost of something is how much of your time and energy you exchange for that thing.

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My realization was that social networking technology was a constant distraction in my life. And it became a limitation in my pursuit of my calling. For me it wasn't realistic to unplug completely but I did delete all social media off of all my mobile devices, and push it to the very margins of my live. So that I can focus my best time on the few things that I felt Jesus is calling me into.

Most of the time our calling is either not connected to our jobs, or at least goes beyond our jobs.

Even though I work at a church, there are a couple big aspects to my calling that are outside of my job. So it means I have to find the time to devote to those things daily.

Devote the best of your time to your calling! To the thing that God put in you and created you to be. That thing is what is going to satisfy you the most, don't trade that for business.

B) Start viewing yourself as Jesus views you

Here is another big limitation that Jesus has been teaching me about.

1) Beware of self-confidence

Some of us naturally have an abundance of self-confidence. And for most of my life I thought that was a good thing. And yes, there are some really upsides to self-confidence; like you try a lot of things because you are not worried about failure. Self-confident do this because they overestimate their strengths, and pay less attention to their weaknesses.

But recently I reading the bible and it said in big black letters warning against self-confidence, and it said this.

James 4:13-16

¹³Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." ¹⁴How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. ¹⁵What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.

The fact is self-confidence comes with some very dark aspects. Such as pride, not as much self-reflecting as we need. Self-confidence limits our lives because we usually do things in our own power rather than God's power.

On the flip side most people probably suffer from low self-esteem.

2) Beware of low self-esteem

Why, because low self-esteem prevents you from taking risks, putting yourself out there, because of fear of failure. It tells you a lie that you are less than Jesus says you are. Low-self-esteem limits your life because you do not believe that God created you for greatness.

So how should we view ourselves?

I discovered this Godly principle from a book I read called "Barking up the Wrong Tree." I doubt he is a Christian but his principle reflects scripture.

3) Embrace self-compassion

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Why?

Because compassion is how Jesus sees you. Ex. 34:6 . . . the first time in the Bible God described himself, the very first word he used was compassionate.

There is a ton of times in the gospel where it records Jesus looking at people with compassion.

Matthew 14:14

¹⁴Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

To view ourselves as God views us, a great start to that is viewing ourselves with compassion. Here is why viewing yourself with compassion is so significant.

You are quick to forgive yourself and move on. Compassion allows us to be honest and real with our short comings, but gives us the capacity to grow, to not beat up ourselves, and to move forward.

You want to remove your limitations. Do this. If you are naturally self-confidence. Exchange that for self-compassion. It has the same upsides without the downsides. If you naturally have low self-esteem, trade that for self-compassion. It will allow you to attempt more because you aren't hard on yourself if you mess up.

And as far as confidence goes, when you break that word part. Con mean with, and fide is faith. So the word literally means with faith. So to find the healthy form of confidence is not in our self. It is faith in what Jesus is doing. Faith in what Jesus is doing inside of us, in the world, in the church. When our confidence is in Jesus, and we view ourselves with compassion. Remove the limitations that have been on our lives.

Gal 6

¹⁴As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C) Don't be critical

What is criticism? It is judging unfavorably or finding fault.

Why are we talking about this? Because this is something Jesus convicted me on. And I believe this is one of the most epidemic limiting problems which follower of Jesus in our day and age.

Why not be critical?

- **Because being a critic makes you just like the world.**

Having a criticism about someone or something is one of the biggest ways the world forms its identity. Who we are becomes wrapped up in our opinions about people and things. And forming our identity around criticism is not how God intended us to live.

- **Because it doesn't work.**

Being critical, and having a critical spirit changes nothing. All it does is create resentment.

- **Because it just makes you a critical person.**

The result it accomplishes, not only does it not change behavior, but it creates something in you. It feeds resentment. It feeds pride, because it gives you a feeling of moral superiority over whatever you are criticizing.

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- **Criticizing lacks love.**

It neglects the most important thing that Jesus taught us to do. Loving each other.

John 15:12

¹²This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.

The world values criticism more than they value love.

But Love is what sets us apart.

So this is something Jesus convicted me on. To never speak another critical word. Am I failing at this? Yes. But it's creating more self-awareness in me, and I believe I am becoming a less critical person.

You might be thinking . . . isn't there a time to take a stand against something.

And I am glad you asked. Yes. There is, and the bible teaches us how to do that. But before I give that to you, let me say this. When I examined my own life 99% of criticism that left my lips or fingers I believed to be wrong and destructive to my life. So starting from a place of trying to stop all criticism was the right thing.

So what is the right way to take a stand?

1) Speak the truth in the context of relationship . . . it is one on one in private.

Matt 18:15

¹⁵"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.

Can't I just criticize what that person did to my friends? No. If you are talking about someone behind their back, you are in the wrong.

Either does Jesus allow us to judge the world. We do not have biblical permission to be the judge over the world. That is Jesus job. Nor does he allow us to judge Christians we don't have a relationship with. If we don't have a relationship with the person, we don't get to judge others.

2) Speak truth in the context of love.

Eph. 4:15

¹⁵Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

And for a reminder of what of is from 1 Cor. 13

⁴Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

You have to self-examine. Is what I am about to say rooted in pride, jealousy, my own self-seeking your own? Is what I am saying believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things?

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If not . . . your criticism is not OK. Neither is mine.

Conclusion:

This message was rooted out of the things that God showed me where limiting my growth into the person he desires me to be.

Some of these things might apply to you, but you might have others as well. Whatever it is. Let's all make sure that whatever is preventing us from becoming all that God wants us to be. Let's remove it, and become who Jesus created us to become in 2018.

Let's pray.