

- If you could sum up your entire early childhood in one word or thought, what would it be? (this answer is intended to be entirely subjective)

6. What "**statement**" do you recall from your parents (esp. father)?
The following examples may help you .

Some were spoken:

- You're just like your father.
- You're just like your mother.
- Why can't you be more like _____?
- You're stupid.
- You're ugly (fat, freckled, short, lanky, nerdy...etc.).
- You'll never amount to anything.

Some were acted out:

- You're dirty. }
- You're only good for one thing. } (sexually abused)
- You're useless. }
- You embarrass me. } (neglected, shunned, never asked or invited)
- I need you to just make it. }
- I rely upon you because I can't rely upon your father (or mother). } (Parent becomes identity=loss of identity)
- You do not matter. }
- You're a disappointment. } (Silence and/or no affection)

(**Be careful here.** There is a marked difference between what you "decided" you would or would not become and the way you "saw" yourself through their eyes. One is the statement you believed about yourself, the other was your reaction to it - do **NOT** confuse the two. This is pivotal! Children will think of themselves what they believe their parents (and often times peers) think about them. It becomes your self-identity, because you own it.)

NOTE: Without fail, your belief will cause the very thing you disdain
because it is the subject of your unwavering focus.

7. What defenses did you develop, in order to cope and protect you in this identity?
8. How do God's statements of your identity differ? (Be specific)
9. Regardless of how your wounds came or what they were - **IF** they are still lingering or sensitive, it is because they said something about you that you believed. This belief has defined a large part of your existence. (What new thoughts or connections came to you as you read these thoughts?)

Blaming God:

1. Be honest with yourself, have you ever blamed God for your childhood (or whatever you believed wounded you)?
2. What were your "Why" questions to Him? (please do not rush this)
3. Does some part of you still ask those questions (or some adaptation of them) whether verbalized, focused on or not? If so, tell God and let it out.
4. Now, invite Him to talk you through your "whys", with as much trust as you have to work with. Call to remembrance all of the examples we have read over the last several weeks of God's loving and caring involvement in people's lives from the Bible. Recall any personal examples of His love for you and hold on to them, as tightly as a life raft throughout this process.

(At the end of this sheet are some practical steps you must take to work through this. See *)

What about free will?

(Really give this some time. It plays into your "victim mentality" as a silent killer, more than you probably realize. To NOT KNOW God is death, and you will never truly draw near if, in your heart of hearts, you do not fully trust Him.) [Remember that knowing God is ALWAYS in the **NOW**]

1. Why is free will SO important for God's plan in creation?
2. Put yourself in God's place for a while. Imagine being the Creator and desiring a creation to share love with (give **AND** receive)...

Now there are some **ground rules** you need to follow, but the predominate one is love. If God (or you as God) is love (as defined in I Cor. 13) then...

- a) The creation would not be created JUST to love You, because that would be self-centered.
- b) Neither could the creation be solely created to receive love only, for that would be to create them for selfishness.
- c) In order for this to work, both the Creator and the created WOULD HAVE to love.

[Admittedly, this is an oversimplification of the topic because some aspects of what God did in creation "appear" selfish... (e.g.- we were created FOR His pleasure.) These topics actually dive into the 3 persons of the Godhead and their honor for one another which is not selfishness but love. Furthermore, the only actions God **CAN** take - **HAVE** to be in accordance with His Own will, in order for it to be the "right" thing, because He IS Creator. Nevertheless, the above statements (a, b & c) are true and can stand on their own. For our purposes here, the above thoughts are sufficient to get us where we are headed.]

With this in mind (a, b, & c of #2)...

3. If you were in God's place, would you choose free will for the creation You designed to enjoy relational love with, or would You force them to love and please You?

A king may be either malevolent or benevolent,
but a dictator - regardless of how kind, will always be resented.

"Though chains be of gold, they are chains even still!"

4. Would your choice be different, if you knew that one day there would be a (your name here) born and that those things you stated above (under **Profile Yourself**) would happen to them? Explain your answer?

5. If, for the sake of that one person, you were to choose to force all to love and please You by removing free will, would You be loving the majority?

6. Would you **REALLY** be loving the one?

Even if we do not fully understand all of these concepts and how they interact, we must believe that the way God did it, was not only the best way, but in fact the only way He could have done it **and remained true to His own nature**.

7. Where, then, is the loving kindness of God when tragedy occurs, as a result of free will?

One thing God has continually offered to mankind is His influence to live united to Him and draw near to Him; to be our continual and unswerving statement (source) of...

- our value
- our self-worth
- our contentment
- our fulfillment
- our deep sense of soul-satisfaction.

Many people, who have been repeatedly victimized, found an inner strength to cope with the horrible onslaught against them by saying to themselves, *"They can touch my body, but they cannot touch my soul."*

This is NOT just a convenient platitude, it is a reality - A reality that can even protect the non-regenerate from living in a victim mentality.

Jesus said it even stronger,

"And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." - Mat. 10:28

Your spirit and soul are the real **you**. Things that happen TO you cannot define you, unless you give them that power, by repeatedly living there in your mind and believing their messages to and about you.

8. What about your past (what happened to you or how you reacted to it) has the power to keep you from living in the reality of the union described in question #7?

You see it is not really about what happened to us (regardless of how heinous) that defines us & owns us - it is how we choose to respond and deal with it.

*"They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, **since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them.**" - 2 Peter 2:19*

Now I know that this is not the intended focus of the verse above, but it is a true statement all by itself which is proven by Jesus' use of the word "whatever".

9. How can living in this union with your Creator effect the wounds inflicted by "men of free will"?
10. Would you really take away another's choice of free will, just to save yourself, and become (in effect) your own savior? (Becoming your own savior may make you physically safe, but it leaves you internally alone - which is worse!)
11. What about those YOU'VE wounded? Would you have God remove your free will for their sake?
-

***The cure - to know and believe you are loved:**

STATEMENTS ABOUT ME:

The statements about me (P. Mark) in my "story" said to me,

- You're invisible
- You're unmanly
- You're insignificant
- You're rejected (denied)
- You do not belong

...and these lies became my "captors" and I was their slave.

STATEMENTS ABOUT YOU:

So, again, I ask you, what are your statements from your story telling you?

The Truth:

As I told you last week, I had to determine NOT to believe these lies. I knew (academically) that God said.....

- I see you
- You're MY son
- You're significant
- You're accepted
- You belong (I chose you)

BELIEF: These truths did not mean as much to me, as the words I heard from others. They didn't mean as much because I did not believe them.

FOCUS: I believed what I focused on. I replayed the rejection over and over in my head (in effect, I meditated on it). I saw it (even in times when it really wasn't there) because I had conditioned my mind to think that way.

FOCUS ==>>>> BELIEF:

So why did I NOT believe God's words - because I did not focus on them.

You might say, "I thought belief came from God, not focusing on something." You're right! Faith does not come from any self effort - and you have no direct control over what God chooses to reveal to you. You do, however, have control over where you focus your attention. God's promise, to be found by ALL WHO SEEK HIM, offers little genuine comfort if you have no power to seek Him.

If you have no control over the focus of your mind, His promise is useless!

REFOCUS: I had to determine to stop wallowing and set my gaze upon Him.

STOP - I had to determine to **stop** wallowing and set my gaze upon Him.

START - I had to say, "I **WILL NOT** believe that I am rejected" (out with the old)
I had to say, "I **WILL** believe that I belong." (in with the new)

PLEASE NOTE: I did not say I BELIEVE! I said the truth. I said "I **WILL** believe". It was a statement of determination, **not** a statement of a current reality. This was not a faith confession, because I did not believe it yet - that was the problem!

I was not denying what was - I was saying what will be - within the boundary of what I could control - **my focus.**

"Set your gaze" . . . "set your mind" . . . "think on these things" . . . "pay attention"

Rom 8:7-8 (MSG) Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores Who God is and what He is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

Rom 8:5 – 8 (HCSB) For those whose lives are according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those whose lives are according to the Spirit, about the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so. 8 Those whose lives are in the flesh are unable to please God.

DETERMINATION :

When I was at *Rhema*, Dr. Andrews defined "determination" one day and I have never forgotten it. He said that - to be determined was to "fix the limits out there".

- I was fixing the limits of my future experience by declaring that I would stop walking in unbelief.
- I was fixing the limits of my future experience by declaring that I would believe what God was saying to me.

I knew I could not conjure up faith from reading *logos*, because I had never been able to before. I had to reach out in vulnerability. I had to fall backwards, not 100% believing that I would be caught, but knowing that I could no longer live in the shadows of doubt. I had to place myself out there and assume I was accepted until He told me otherwise. I was terrified, but determined!

What does this mean for you?

{SUBMIT TO GOD and RESIST THE DEVIL Js. 4:7}

You have to determine to reject (resist) AND submit!

To reject the lie To submit to the truth	}	Neither require faith, only determination.
---	---	---

What this does is give you ears to hear. It does this by inclining your heart to truth.

GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

This will create an environment (through submission and humility) to be a recipient for God's direct influence. Notice God does not say that He will give grace to the humble who believe that He will give grace. The **only** requirement for grace is submission (or humility). If faith is the product of grace, then you cannot need faith to get grace!

I could not "hear" what God was trying to tell me all those years because I was not focused on Him, which kept me from submitting to Him.

But He turned and said to Peter, "*Get **behind Me**, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not **mindful** of the things of God, but the things of men.*" Mat. 16:23

This was true even when I tried to focus on the written word (logos), because I saw it with my "rejected due to poor performance" lenses on. I was seeing the logos while still "*mindful of the things of men*".

*Rom 8:7 (HCSB) For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not **submit itself** to God's law, for it is unable to do so.*

Final Questions:

Invite the Holy Spirit into these times with you. As you begin to become attuned to His voice and inclined to believe it, your soul will begin to find its rest in Him.

You must say, "If this is for anyone, then it is for ME too. - I am NOT the exception!"

This can be taken in two different ways.

A) Some of you had the privilege of a pretty good childhood and may find it hard to relate to many of the "wounded states" explored in this handout. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you some of the more subtle aspects of the influences on your life. We have all been prey to false truths and false statements about who we really are. You might be surprised to find out what falsehoods you have been living in. We all see "*through a glass dimly*". In one way or another, we all need to let God help us "clean our lenses".

B) Others of you have no problem recognizing the issues, but have difficulty believing there really is a solution. This really is for you TOO! Name those who you believe are loved and cherished and pursued by God. Then look at those names and say, "*If God loves them - it is unavoidable that He loves, cherishes & pursues me too and I WILL believe it!*"

1. What limits do YOU need to fix? (What do you need to determine)
2. What lies do you need to reject (resist)?
3. What truths do you need to submit to?
4. Begin to verbalize them...
 - "I WILL believe....."
 - "I WILL NOT believe....."
 - "I will believe what God says of me – God says _____"

I was seeking things, methods, studies, people, work ...etc. to validate me. These are the "*things (or methods) of men*". I was seeking to affirm (by externals) what could **only** be believed.

5. Name your methods of validation and coping. (The empty wells you've gone to for "therapy").

They wear many masks, they can be a statement about yourself or a Mask you wear (hide behind)

- I'm not emotional. I don't get hurt anymore. I'm numb. (*Mask of being tough*)
- I'm independent. (*Mask of being strong*)
- I'm wounded - wearing it like a badge of (dis-)honor Wallowing. (*Mask of Martyr*)
- I am strong - A leader, who takes no orders only gives them. (*Mask of defense*)
- I'm silent - unwilling to commit relationally to another person. (*Mask of detachment*)
- I'm a workaholic (or sleep-aholic). - (BIG time avoider! *Mask of Avoidance*)
- I entertain myself constantly (movies, music, TV, parties...etc.) - (Avoider)
- I drink - (Avoider)
- I help others - These "over involved" nurturers are perhaps the MOST deluded, because their outward actions "appear" to be for everyone else, when in reality it is a method of validating their worth, a means of coping with loneliness, a way of feeling good about themselves, and of avoiding what they are running from.

Spend some time identifying yourself in either (or both) of the stories we read this week. Allow the stories to walk you through your road to knowing & believing.

The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32

Paul - Eph. 3:1-21 (II Cor. 12:1-10)