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Judgements

Inside Terry's Office: January 2020

Judgements



"And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll (also referred to as The Book of Life)?' But no one on heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll and look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.'" Rev. 5: 2-5

During counseling sessions, I have to be diligent to monitor myself and my counselee(s) as to whether we are stating conclusions concerning the character and/or intentions of others; especially one spouse reaching a judgement against the other. Although we must speak honestly about what behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs we have and that we witness in others, we are not operating in a healthy way when we judge each other's motivations. The judgments I hear most often are

"He/She doesn't really care", "He/She thinks I'm _____ (stupid, unattractive, unchristian, not worth listening to)", etc.

My counselee may be desperate to reach a conclusion about the wisdom or folly of trying to "find their way together" with another. It is understandable that they (we) want to reach a conclusion as to whether their efforts are in vain because the other person is deprived in some way. Nevertheless, it is never healthy to reach a judgment concerning another human being. According to scripture, only Jesus is tasked and trusted to make such judgments.

If we can set aside such judgments, we are still left with needing to determine whether it is healthy for us to continue to invest in a relationship with someone whose motivations we don't trust. Of course, we want a definitive answer; "you are wasting your efforts" or "God wants (commands?) that you continue to make the best you can of the relationship". Without the benefit of a direct answer we are left to struggle with ourselves and with God as to what is the Biblical/healthy/godly next steps. AND, these are the right struggles!! If those struggles are sabotaged by judgements of others or dogmatic positions our healing and sanctifying process is avoided (for the moment, at least).

On the other hand, what if our judgments are of a positive nature; "we are both Christians ...". Isn't that a better place to be in our relationships?

NO. Actually, the positive judgment can be just as unhealthy. It may seem too much to bear if we don't know for sure that our spouse, ... our children, ... our parents, ... our friends, ... our spiritual leaders are SAVED. Yet, the fact that we can't KNOW is exactly what was revealed to the apostle John. According to the verses quoted above (and numerous others I could reference) this intimate knowledge is entrusted to Jesus alone. So, I will say to you as I do my counsees, "There are seven seals on the book of life and we are not worthy to open any of them." We can have overwhelming reason to assume or doubt someone's salvation, but we can not know.

I wish I had time and space to unpack this idea with you, but maybe it is a concept I can just challenge you to meditate on for awhile.

Rev. 5: 9, *"And they sang a new song: You are worthy o take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

In His Grip, TWE

Inside Terry's Office:

February 2020

The Sin Motivation of Sloth: How Important Can It Be?

I've written and taught on sin motivations many times and have been convinced that the proper understanding of Sloth is "When what is important is not worth the effort to us." Yet, I'm still learning the depth of the "noetic effects of sin"; the ways in which sin affects our thinking. Today, as I read the familiar verses below, I'm impressed with a new understanding of how I have been affected by Sloth.

Then he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in. ...

What struck me in my reading of these verses this time was the idea that the things Jesus referred to 1) were small moments being given a great deal of importance, and 2) were things that it does not take training or gifting to do. ***Small moments given a great deal of importance.***

This last month in our Soul Care classes I have been interviewing counselees I've cared for throughout the years; one was recounting her exorcism, one her struggles with Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and one with a history of Bi-Polar disorder. None of them gave an account of the brilliant insights or the amazing spiritual power they experienced in me. Indeed (the ungrateful wretches) hardly mentioned me at all; as if I were only along-side them on their journey. As if I were there simply to offer a cup of water while they were being healed by God. As if the **most important** thing I did was to invite them into my office. Can that be right?

Offering things that it does not take training or gifting to do.

Let me be clear: I think my training and gifting is important in that it leads me to be in the situation(s) to offer my cup of water to people being healed by God, but what I am offering is really only a cup of water! And, the importance of offering the cup of water offered in Jesus' name is not increased by the setting. The importance of the cup of water is the same whether I am offering it to the homeless, or to a prisoner, or to my family, or from a large pulpit to crowds of influential people! To think otherwise is to misunderstand what is important and to embrace Sloth.

Do you remember the time I said _____, or when you read what I wrote about _____, or even the miracle(s) you experienced when I _____. If you remember such times at all, you will probably have the impression that God was with you and I was simply alongside to offer a cup of water. **AND THAT IS HOW IT IS!** SmilamightyJesus and offer a cup of water!

In His Grip, TWE



Camz Counsel: January 2020

Sober Judgment

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with **sober judgment**, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.” (Romans 12:3 NIV)

The definition for *sober* we will consider in this context is *serious, sensible and solemn*. Read how The Passion Translation translates this verse,

God has given me [Paul] grace to speak a warning about pride. I would ask each of you to be emptied of self-promotion and not create a false image of your importance. Instead **honestly assess your worth by using your God-given faith as the standard of measurement**, and then you will see your true value with an appropriate self-esteem. (Romans 12:3, TPT)

As I write this article on the Seven Deadly Sin of Pride for January 2020, our family is facing a difficult transition. The transition is the anticipation of our dear Mother, Grandma and GiGi, Oleta Johnson, passing from this life on earth to the next in Glory. Oleta has lived the past 5 years with my sister-in-law, Lella, and over the last year and a half Lella has kicked into full time care giver. Hospice care has been called in and so there has been some support but primarily the weight of care especially over night remains on Lella’s shoulders and she has said that is the way she wants it to be. Today, however, Lella used some sober judgment and assessed her limitations to provide a safe environment for our mom. I couldn’t be more proud of Lella for this very brave and loving confession.

“Pride is disagreeing with God concerning, our character and/or our attributes. When we disagree with God concerning our attributes, we are judging God.” (Stickman’s Battles, Terry Ewing) The thing that makes any of the deadly sins deadly is the fact that they all have the ability to sneak right up on you! In my counseling office it is always interesting to see the look on a counselee’s face when I say, “Hmm, it sounds like you might be thinking more highly of yourself than you ought.” This is most likely to happen when I hear someone self-deprecating for not having been enough in some capacity. She/he might say something like, “I should have known”; “if I had only”; “I can’t believe I let that happen”. Most of us think of someone who is proud as being a braggard and low self-esteem being the opposite of that; and I suppose the two things do seem very different, and yet in both cases there is an unhealthy drawing of attention to one’s self.

When I was in college in the 70s there was a popular statement circulating, “God didn’t make no junk.” It was a clever reminder to not judge God for the way he made you. When we utilize the Taylor Johnson Temperament Analysis we will often hear the woeful lament about how messed up they are! We might feel like we *should be better* than what the pattern shows. Lately, when I have been discussing the TJTA findings with a counselee, I have been talking about how God *tempers* our temperament patterns so that our true (“joyful”) identity can shine forth. When you look up the definition of temper as a verb you find, 1. Improve the hardness and elasticity of (steel or other metals) by reheating and then cooling it; 2. Act as a neutralizing or counterbalancing force to (something). Now isn’t that sobering?! God is doing his good work in us. He is refining those rough edges, breaking away those hard shells, softening hearts to conform us to his image, his intended design for us.

No matter your story –
Jesus is writing you even now into a restorative story.
He graces you with plain grace. (Ann Voskamp)

Do you know that a glow stick (most often seen around the 4th of July) can only glow if it’s been broken? My sister-in-law had to become aware of her own weakness in order to make the most loving decision for our mom and God will give her the grace and power to accept her limitations. That is why we embrace our weaknesses so that Christ’s power might be perfected in us! (2 Corinthians 12:9)

As you step into this New Year, I pray you soberly regard God’s work in you and “**honestly assess your worth by using your God-given faith as the standard of measurement**”!

CAMZ Counsel

February 2020

Sloth

The definition of sloth is, “when what is important is not worth the effort.” A fancier definition is “a habitual disinclination to exertion”. In his book, *Stickman’s Battles*, Terry has eloquently outlined the levels of establishing a stronghold of slothfulness in our lives.

Demonstrating an ambivalence toward the general will of God. The general will of God refers to the will that God has for our lives that is the same for everyone. Slothfulness here would be in regard to a denial that God knows what is best for us. (SB, pp. 61-62)

Devaluing our God-given life purpose to the point that I believe who I am or what I do doesn’t matter. (SB, pp. 62-64)

A lack of knowledge of or surrender to the specific will of God. This is knowing God’s specific will for you. (SB, pp. 64-65)

Becoming overcommitted to the loudest emotional needs. Without a rational basis for decision-making, we end up adopting subjective (emotional-based) means of decision-making.

It is this last level that has caught my attention today keeping in mind that the previous three levels all factor into being overcommitted to the loudest emotional needs. Codependency is a good example. The codependent will find it difficult to trust that God knows best and that God is at work in us to act according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:13). Codependency interferes with our ability to discern that purpose and God’s specific will as the responsibility we feel for others creates a need for their approval and validation.

Although being a codependent does not feel slothful with expending all that emotional energy, it does set us up for ignoring what is truly important. For the codependent it is easier to take the subjective road of fixing, rescuing, managing, burden bearing and the list goes on rather than remaining objective. Objectivity can feel uncaring especially when we don’t get the response that validates we have been caring.

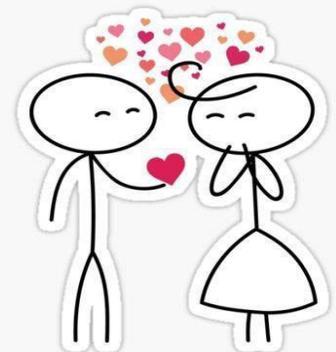
It is actually said that the sin of sloth is the deadliest of the deadly sins as it is a sin of omission. Codependency is a twisting of true love demanding instead that only one person’s feelings get to matter at a time. As I am writing this, I was led to Mark 12:30-31 (NIV) where Jesus responds to the question, “What is the greatest commandment?”

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Notice that Jesus answers with two commandments because according to Jesus these two teachings can never be separated from each other, love God and love others. This to me perfectly expresses what is IMPORTANT. If we love God, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength then it goes without saying, that our hearts will be intertwined with His and His love propels us to love others from a place of fullness rather than lack. We trust the will of God; we know that God has a purpose for us and we know our value. We love others from that same confidence and trust allowing for both feelings to matter thus we love others as we would love ourselves!

For every deadly sin, there is a corresponding virtue. The virtue for sloth is diligence, when what is important is worth the effort. One of the things this time of the year brings is a time to reflect on what is really important and worth expending time and resources into. I pray friends that you would be diligent in seeking after God and learning what it means to love others as you would love yourself.

Carol Anne



25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
&
SILENT AUCTION

Save
the
Date

Come Celebrate 25 Great Years of God Stories!

Saturday, June 27, 2020

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Skyline 60 CityPlex Towers

2488 E. 81st St. 60th Floor Tulsa, OK

plumb|ine
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Plumblin Ministries' 25th Anniversary Celebration Gala June 20, 2020

How Can You Help?

Thanks to all our supporters who partner with us in prayer, donate funds and give generously in so many ways...We cannot do it without you!

It is with great joy we are celebrating our 25th year of Ministry at Plumblin. As we prepare to celebrate, we'd love to extend an invitation to once again partner with us and share in our joy. There are many ways you can provide support for our celebration. Following is a list of ways you or your business can help!

Sponsor our Anniversary Gala Venue. (We are expecting 340 attendees for a dinner celebration with special guest speakers.)

Sponsor a Table at the Event. (Contact our office for different levels of Sponsorship)

Sponsor the Staff, (Interns and their Spouses to attend)

Donate Catering for the Event

Sponsor Cost of Advertising

Donate Items or Services for the Silent Auction

Give as The Lord leads you.

If you are able to help and need further information, please contact Liz Merrill at (918) 477-9068.

TRUST BUILDING WORKSHOP

March 7, 2020 8:30—2:30

Trust is a fundamental element of all healthy relationships. When trust is broken, so is the relationship. This workshop is intended for anyone who has experienced the pain of lost trust and is wanting to find help in learning how to trust again. It is also intended for those who have broken the trust of another and want to learn how to make amends. You may just want to learn how to deepen your capacity to trust. This is for you too!

Facilitator: Anthony Elliott **Cost:** \$75.00 per person or 2 for \$100.00 with a friend!

Stickman's Prayers

stickman's prayers

the everyday practice of
"loosing prayers"
and the ministry of
"exploratory prayers"



Michelle Carpenter
Terry Ewing
Erin Garcia
Margo Hanne
Carolyn Knippers
Carol McNamarra
Sue Merrill

Plumblin's newest book, *Stickman's Prayers* has been published and is now available at Plumblin!

Would you be surprised to know that the "Prayer of Jabez" was a joke?

Would you be happy to know what kind of prayers are appropriate for you to pray for yourself and what kinds are meant for you to pray for others and others for you?

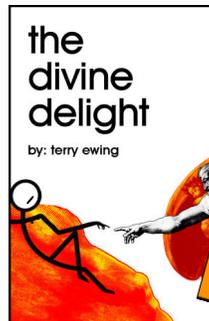
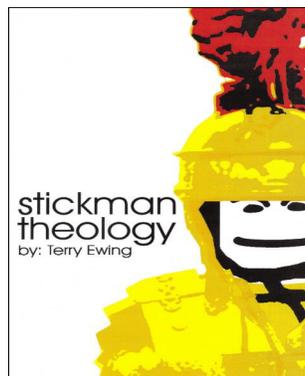
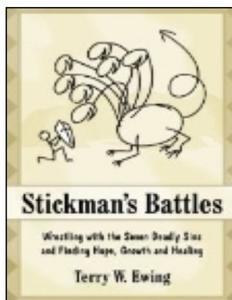
Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

Praying is the most natural thing in the world for Christians; an on going conversation with our best friend, counselor, and confidant; gratitude to our Savior and provider; intercession on behalf of our friends; requests to our Creator. In this regard, a book on prayer may seem presumptuous. When you write a book on Prayer aren't you suggesting that some are praying wrongly, or, at least could be praying better?

That really is not the kind of message we look to promote. So...why the book?

The *Stickman's Prayers* serves two purposes. First, to challenge some ideas that other teaching and preaching concerning prayer has promoted. And, to offer simple encouragements to personal prayer and prayer ministries.

Available at Plumblin for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each



Did you know you can download

Stickman Theology

On your KINDLE?

Did you know that when you shop on Amazon, you could be helping to financially support Plumblin? Through the Amazon smiles program, **Amazon will donate a portion of the sales to Plumblin.** All you need to do is go to smiles.amazon.com, designate Plumblin Ministries, and start shopping! Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the total sales price to Plumblin. Please remember to bookmark that page and you can help us as you shop!

PLUMBLINE

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