



THE LIFE-GIVING WOMAN

MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER



Dear friend,

Well, last month you stuck with me all the way to the end. And your resounding response was, “more on self-awareness.”

So, we’ll camp out here a little bit. But first I’m wondering, did you do some work last month?

Did you sit down with the Lord and ask yourself any of the questions I shared? Did you talk about the answers with Him?

I hope you did.

But, if you didn’t, we’ll get back to it next month, and I hope to have a handy printable to guide you in the process.

I know it might feel a little daunting, but I promise you, it’s worth it. And if you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out over email. Simply hit reply to this one.

Can I be a little vulnerable with you before we continue on? There are a few reasons that I’m passionate about this beautiful Biblical principle of self-awareness.

The first is that I’ve been significantly hurt by a few important women in my life. As time has gone on, I’ve come to understand that there are three main reasons why they hurt me. The first is that they weren’t self-aware, and the second is that they lacked security in their identity in Christ. But lastly, because these two things weren’t present, their ability to respect their own boundaries and the boundaries of others was largely absent.

And unfortunately, I think all of these things can be common among Christian

women.

Which leads to my remaining reasons for caring about this issue so much. I don't want to be an unhealthy person, I want to lead women to Jesus, and I want other women to grow up in Him, healthy.

(And just to clarify, when I use the word "healthy," I'm primarily referring to spiritual and emotional health.)

But the degree of my health will affect my ability to do this. The more unhealthy I am, the more unhealthy I'll behave. I'll either seek to lead people to myself, or I'll neglect leading them anywhere at all. And it's likely that any disciple I do replicate will be as unhealthy as I am.

The concept of self-awareness and understanding our identity are closely linked. The reality of salvation is a great picture of this: we don't receive the gift of salvation unless we're first made aware of our sin and our deep need for a Savior. Once we're aware, we respond with healthy action. We move toward Christ in trust, and transformation happens.

This is the ultimate goal in self-awareness. We want to be women who are partnering with Jesus to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and who look and act more like Him with each passing day. This journey requires deep trust in the One who created us, knows everything about us, and knows what's best for us each step of the way.

But if we aren't secure in that Love, it makes the practice of self-awareness very difficult. We'll avoid it, be overly sensitive, easily offended, oblivious to areas of our heart and life that are out of sync with the gospel, etc.

And then the potential to hurt people increases. And nobody wants to be close to someone who hurts people.

Sister, there is a reputation at stake, and it's not ours. Jesus told his disciples, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:35).

We were created to bring glory to God, and we are His ambassadors. Our capacity to love well, and to bring glory to His name increases as we become more aware of our own hearts *and know Him in the process.*

It's a scary thought to peer into our hearts, isn't it? But the good news is, **we don't need to do it alone.** He wants us to do it *with* Him. I think of Psalm 139 when David said,

"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?"

*If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you."*

Psalm 139:7-12

There's safety in doing this **with the Lord**, because His desire is to love us into a clean and pure heart, not condemn us when He reveals sin. His *kindness* leads us to repentance.

So this month, I'd like to slow down and ponder our identity in Christ. I really want us to know how to know Him, and to delight in the journey of knowing Him more. It is the foundation for any growth the Lord gives in our hearts.

He Likes You

I remember when the idea was first posed to me. *He likes you*. I cringed against it.

How could He like *me*? More often than not, I resonate with Paul who described himself as "the worst of sinners" ([1 Tim. 1:15-16 NIV](#)). I did not believe it, and wrestled with the reality for a few years. Yes, *years*.

And I don't think I'm alone in my struggle. If you and I were sitting down over coffee and I asked you, "Do you believe that the Lord likes you?" I think it's highly likely that I'd receive doubtful responses.

It's possible that what follows in your mind is something along the lines of, "If she only knew my past, or what I am struggling with..."

But I also think that some of us haven't even thought about it.

The fruit of both responses shows in our lack of confidence, our inclination to turn to other things to satisfy us (including relationships, prestige, power, etc.), or our lack of having regular conversation with Him.

They indicate a disconnect in our understanding of His truly unconditional love toward us who believe.

When we aren't rooted and grounded in His love for us—or His liking of us—we *will* look for that deep need somewhere else, and the result of that will always spillover into the relationships around us. God made us for His glory. There's an innate desire in our hearts to be loved and to be liked. To be known. **And it's not bad**. But He

intended these desires to be satisfied by *Himself*.

Think about your best friend for a minute. Don't you love to spend time with her? You can spend endless hours talking and enjoying doing just about anything together, right? Well, that is how the Lord thinks of you and me as daughters. He **delights** in spending time with us.

He wants to give us the richest treasures of His heart, take us on the grandest adventures, and He wants to just *be* with us.

Yes, He knows your sin. He knows the absolute *worst* of it. But girl, you've got to understand that there *really is* no condemnation in Jesus. None. He bore that for you on the cross. When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, it's because He's wooing you to the love of Jesus. He is saying, "Come to me! Bury yourself in the safety of my chest! I will cleanse your heart and make it pure again." He does not want you to run and hide like you're tempted to do. He really is the safest of safe.

This reality was transformational in my own life several years ago. I will never forget sitting in an early morning Bible study when this clicked for me. The teacher said something to the affect of, when the Holy Spirit comes to gently convict you of you sin, you're in a vulnerable place before you repent. The enemy knows that and will slip in as often as he can to flaunt your sin before you, reminding you just how terrible it is. Not only that, but he'll put on quite a spectacular display before your eyes of what a terrible person you are.

It can be pretty difficult to confidently say "No!" to that, can't it? I mean, we know how bad it is. But *not if we are confident in His love toward us*.

You and I must believe that He is who He says He is, and run to Him **in faith**. Goodness, this brings tears to my eyes as I write because He has taught me this and it has changed my life. And I want to help others know it, too. Listen to what is true of you and me:

Those who look to him are *radiant*, and their faces shall never be ashamed.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

Psalm 34:5-7

When we run to Jesus, He will not shame us. But we have a very real enemy who will, and who wants us to believe that our Father will, too.

First Steps

Alright, so what if as you're being honest with yourself, you really don't believe that He

likes you, or delights in you, or wants to be with you?

I want to encourage you to tell Him.

Be honest with Him. He won't despise it and He won't chastise you. He wants you to know how he thinks and feels about you, *and his thoughts aren't bad*. He'll take what you think He thinks about you, and bring healing as He speaks His word over your heart.

So, go to Him with His Word in hand. Start with words that speak of who He is and how He loves:

- "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ..." (Eph. 2:4-5) - *when you were dead in your sin, He extended His love toward you. He made you alive together with Him!*
- "O Lord, my longing is before you; my sighing is not hidden from you. (Ps. 38:9) - *He sees you and hears you.*
- "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10) - *He is not repulsed by you, but moves toward you.*
- "Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? (Ps. 113:5-6) and "Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Php 2:5-8) - *He humbled Himself to look on you and to make you His own.*

(The above verses are meant to be a primer. Anytime you open the Word, you can look for His heart and character.)

Say His Word to your heart and back to Him, out loud. And remember, *be honest*. If you don't believe the words you're saying, tell Him. Ask Him to help you believe.

This isn't meant to be a self-focused exercise. But, we are practiced in listening to other voices more than His, or other voices are louder than His in our heart and mind. So, **we need to take time to hear from Him**. We need to practice allowing His voice be louder than all the rest. And we need to practice believing it.

What we're actually doing in this exercise is lifting our eyes to Him expectantly.

And goodness, let the tears flow if they need to. You're cultivating a beautiful relationship with Him, and vulnerability is needed. He poured out His heart for you on the cross and in His Word, and so it's your turn to respond.

What will happen as you declare His word to your heart and to His, is an honoring of

Him. You'll be adoring Him. And through this practice, slow transformation will occur. In tandem, you'll grow secure in your identity in Him, *and* you'll know Him increasingly as He really is. You'll be bringing Him glory!

Don't beat yourself up if you don't feel anything. We don't need to rely on our feelings to tell us what's true. The more you do the work of seeking after Him, He will change you. Fruit and feelings will follow at some point, usually when we least expect it. Just go to Him and get His truth into you. As you do, He'll massage it into your heart.

This is part of what it is to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. The next part of that verse says, **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure** (Php 2:12-13). You show up. And He *will* show up.

And as we both show up, the journey to becoming healthy, whole-hearted followers of Christ *can* happen in a life-giving way. When we understand that his intentions toward us are always kind and loving, we can grow in self-awareness without feeling threatened, scared, or condemned.

I don't know where you are in your journey with the Lord, but I pray that in this next month, you will encounter Him in fresh ways. I think about you all month long, and as I hit send on this month, this prayer is on my lips:

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:15-21

Love,

Kelly

Now for a few favorites from February...

- Loving the songs [Because He lives](#) by Matt Maher and [King of Kings](#) by Hillsong
- The current season of the [Journeywomen podcast](#). Hunter Beless is back at it with an excellent series on discipleship.

- I'm currently reading Jennie Allen's new book, [Get Out of Your Head](#) with some friends. She and I have been on a similar journey over the past several years, it seems!

P.S. I post regularly on Instagram and Facebook (and Twitter occasionally). You can click the buttons below to follow me. If you leave a comment, let me know you're a newsletter subscriber!



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