

Just Be Your Real Self

by Norman P. Grubb

Nothing dogs our footsteps more in Christian living than our constant sense of condemnation. We see ourselves as such failures; we seem to be so fruitless. We are so up and down. We are such weaklings, so cowardly. Our battles are not so much against the great sins — the things we do or don't do — but with this dragging feeling that we are no use because we are such a mess. We look at others, and some of them seem to be doing fine; so we wonder why we are such failures. We are constantly weighted down with a heavy feeling. We don't feel bright, we don't feel loving, we don't feel spiritual; but we do feel out of touch, dull, dry, powerless.

The sense of condemnation manifests itself continually in the quick way in which we downgrade ourselves as useless, more of a hindrance to God than a help, so rebellious, so disobedient; and we are fond of saying that if God uses us at all, it is in spite of ourselves. To know how we can accept ourselves without condemnation is of the greatest importance. To fail to understand this is to have all of our vitality sapped from us.

The key is that it is He who accepts us, and He who chooses us.

If it depended on our choosing Him, we might continually hold back, for how could we know He would accept such as us? But He chose us — unconditionally. *"You have not chosen Me; I have chosen you."*

He chooses us exactly as we are, with every facet of our humanity. We may well laugh at the strangeness of His choices, but that is no business of ours. He paid the highest price possible for us — the price of His own Son's blood — so we had better get busy choosing ourselves if He has chosen us. To not accept those He accepts is to insult Him.

In fact, we need a thorough spring-cleaning of those condemning, smearing, guilty ideas we have inherited or picked up somehow about ourselves. That is why the wide-openness of today, though it shocks many because of its abuses, is actually much healthier and much nearer the truth than the hush-hush of past generations. And no book can be more boldly open than the Bible. There a spade is never called anything but a spade.

Let it sink into us that there is not a single reaction that we can have as humans — not a single response of our bodies, minds, emotions, imaginations — which is intrinsically wrong. God intends that we have all of these human reactions.

Let us drag such things to the surface and, instead of condemning the instincts or reactions — instead of trying to pretend they are not there, like so much religious play-acting — examine how misuse can be replaced by right use.

The negative is to say a thing is wrong, conceal it if you can. The positive is to face it and see how God's purpose is to use that very tendency as some channel for His outgoing goodness.

God *"works all things after the counsel of His own will."* He is in us *"to will and to do of His good pleasure."* When we have been called by Him and accepted by Him, *"all things [negative and positive] work together for good."*

Every situation we go through is God's perfect will. It is precisely the necessary one. So praise God for each situation! Don't question or condemn yourself in any situation, because this is what produces the bondage of spirit that has caused us all so much suffering. Instead, accept yourself exactly as you are and as you feel.

Don't fret and struggle and try to change —just be yourself. Realize that as you are honest with yourself and with others about the way you are, there is no condemnation whatever. *"God is the One who justifies; who is the one who condemns?"* At the same time, realize also that Christ is now your life. He has replaced your old self. This then releases you to be truly free as yourself — the Christ in you.

Only He can change any attitudes and feelings you might have. So don't try to do more than what comes easily and naturally for you. Just do the next things that come spontaneously to you. Take the position that in Christ you are dead to everything except abiding in Him.

Sometimes this death includes those things we would really like to be. But we have to be content to be what He chooses to be in us at this moment. *"If need be you are in heaviness through manifold trials"* Peter says. When it is one of those times for you, accept the human heaviness and suffering and don't try to change this condition. Just accept it as being His direct will for the moment, and praise Him for it.

You can't tell what God has for you, or what future purposes He might have in the experiences you are going through right now, so don't try to find out. Just keep doing what you feel at present He is giving you to do. He has a perfect purpose for all that is happening to you, even if at present it is not clear. So keep centered on this glorious freeing truth.

The single eye of faith of which Jesus spoke enables us to remain free within, regardless of outside circumstances and appearances. We are not to be double-minded, frustrated by the circumstances. We are to accept fully the situation of the moment — the external situation He has us in, and the way we feel toward it — knowing that it is for the purpose of manifesting His life in us.

Our sole job is to keep inwardly at rest in the midst of suffering and temptation — and in the midst of failure and seeming defeat — knowing that we walk with Him alone and that He walks in us and will cause us to walk in His ways.

Because He has determined to take us this way, He does not see the confusion, heaviness or perplexity, but only His next step in His perfect plan for us. And He in us is the One who will bring it to pass as we accept the present fully and rejoice in it, trusting that all things truly do work for good despite the appearance of the moment.