

In Exodus, there is a pattern the people of Israel continued to fall into with regard to their deliverance from Egypt. **Exodus 16:3** says:

3 And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

You see, the hand of God delivered them from Egypt, but getting Egypt out of them was a different story. We who are born again are also delivered from the slavery of sin and death. **Romans 8:2** says we have been delivered from sin and death because of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus when we are saved. Just like the people of Israel, if we don't change the way we think about what God has done, we can also look back and say it was so great “when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full.”

How could they want to go back? How could they be so shortsighted? The answer is not as difficult as you would think. They had conditioned themselves—you could say **they had built their identity and their self-image and self-worth around their fleshly needs being met**, even if they were slaves.

You see, your self-image and self-worth do not happen by accident. They are formed by how you have experienced life up until this point. This is exactly what Paul was saying in **Ephesians chapter 2 verse 2:**

2 “in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,”

You see, this is where most of us start out, programmed by the prince of this world. A lot of us did not grow up in a Christian environment, and even if we did, we are still surrounded by the noise of this world and Christians who don't always act Christ-like. The image formed in us as we have developed essentially establishes our self-image and our self-worth.

Does the Bible have anything to tell us with regard to how we should start thinking about ourselves after we are born again? Sure it does. It has a whole lot to say. So why do we stay in the same place? Why do we see ourselves as we were and not as God wants us to be? See what God said through Moses to the Israelites in **Exodus 16:11-12:**

11 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

12 “I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’ ”

Why did Israel not listen to God? Why do we not listen to God? It is because we have not looked to our text for the answer; we have only been looking at our situation. Looking at the situation does not offer us the frame of thinking we need to have. Looking at our circumstances ignores the obvious answer staring us in the face. Ephesians chapter 2 continues in verse 10:

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Everything in our lives has an event that begins a process. Think about it: if you had a major trauma in your life as a result of your own sin or the sin of another, that event or series of events created a domino effect that formed or deformed something within you.

Proverbs 23 talks about how unwise it is to do exactly what the Israelites were doing:

- 1** When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
Consider carefully what is before you;
- 2** And put a knife to your throat
If you are a man given to appetite.

You can see how this advice in **Proverbs** is exactly what the people of Israel needed to hear. They were desiring to go back to the feet of Pharaoh when God had brought them out and placed them at His feet.

To move toward the mindset God wants for us, and to allow His workmanship to take shape in our lives, we must begin to identify the attributes that have formed our self-image and self-worth. ***Being born again changes everything, but it does not automatically change every pattern of thinking we developed before we knew Him.*** Just as Israel had been delivered from Egypt but still had to learn how to live as God's people, we must learn to recognize the ways our old life continues to influence how we see ourselves. These old patterns can become anchor points that keep pulling our thinking back toward "Egypt". Let's take a look at some of the reasons we stay in the Egypt mindset:

- 1.** We are in self-deception and are not walking in the truth about ourselves.
- 2.** Our normal and typical responses keep us from seeing things as God wants us to.
- 3.** The patterns and rhythms of our lives are not conducive to a new way of living.
- 4.** Self-love keeps us from seeing others as God intends.
- 5.** Our sources of validation are based in our old life and not on our new one.
- 6.** Our behaviors have their anchor points in the old nature.
- 7.** Self-confidence is misplaced because it is not based on transformation.
- 8.** Self-criticism is out of touch with what God is working out in us.
- 9.** Self-worth is based on personal achievements rather than spiritual development.

So what do we do? Look at what it says in **Romans 8:5-8**

- 5** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- 6** For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
- 7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.
- 8** So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Our answer is not going to be found in setting our minds on the things of the flesh. All of the things listed above will keep us minding the things of the flesh and maintaining an identity of self based on the old. When we choose to mind the things of the spirit, it brings us **life (zoe)**—the God-kind of life) and peace.

Even Paul, when referring to the blindness of Israel in his time, as mentioned in **Romans 11:25**, gives us a heads-up by example: “that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in”.

We should not be living in the same blindness they do. In **verse 25**, right before he mentions Israel, Paul says this: “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion”.

To be wise in our own opinion is to be like the nation of Israel in **Exodus**, and the same as in Paul’s time, or even today as they wrestle with the purposes of God. We are not called to this wrestling, but to the reality of the promises found in Jesus.

Matthew 10:16 says, “we are to be as wise as serpents.” That word “**wise**” really is the word **prudent**. It means to have the ability to discern modes of action with a view to their results, the exercising of behaviors to avoid error or danger, and to be wise in our relationships and how we conduct ourselves. This implies the enemy has this kind of wisdom at work, but that we can have a wisdom, or a prudence, about our lives that supersedes his. It is through the development of our spiritual life that we grow into this wisdom. Look at what James says about this in **chapter 3, verse 17**:

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Notice, it says this wisdom is from above, meaning it is not found in the flesh. This wisdom must be cultivated within our spirit, and it must come from above. Remember, we have the Holy Spirit residing within us, meaning “above” is always present with us.

We will never live from above if we are constantly living in the past. Your past and my past have no resemblance to the promises ahead in Christ. God does not look at us in Egypt. He sees us and treats us as if we are what we ought to be, and He helps us become what we are capable of being based on His plans and His purposes for our lives. He moved the nation of Israel towards the promised land and now He moves us.

Have a blessed month, everyone.

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