

Healthy Identity

As we look at scripture we're introduced to many people.

Esther – lovely in form and features (2:7)

David a conscientious shepherd

Saul/Paul

He was a zealous man before meeting Jesus and he was still a zealous man after meeting Jesus – he just lived it differently

Dorcas Acts 9:36 – 42

A disciple who was “always doing good and helping the poor.”

Craftsmen Exodus 31:1-11

men with skills in making artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze.

Anna Luke 2:36-38

84 year old prophetess who worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

In all these people we see a blend of *natural abilities, practice and the H. S.*

You

You are unique and therefore in every encounter you have you bring something that no one else can bring in exactly the same way.

Our bodies are part of our 'package'.

How do you feel about your body? In what ways does your body affect your interactions with other people? To what extent do others' bodies affect how you treat them?

YOU

So, what are your characteristics? How are you and the HS co-operating in using these characteristics?

We may admire the characteristics of someone else and even be inspired by them, but be careful not to compare yourself with someone else in an inappropriate way, which results in you being discouraged.

We're not asked to be exactly like anyone else.

Honour

- Do you give honour to who you are, and to who others are? Not just the super talented ones, but everyone

WWJD

- How about the question, **What would Jesus have ME do?**
- There is only one Jesus.

When we desire to become more like Jesus, what do we mean?

The Greatest Commandment Matt 22:37-39

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and **greatest** commandment. And the second is like it; love your neighbour as yourself.

All the law and prophets hang on these two commandments.”

So how do I follow Jesus in a way that fits me ME – perhaps not exactly like anyone else.

Discernment

This is the territory of discernment. Discerning how I live a godly life which uses my gifts, my personality, my experiences, without comparing or criticising how others live their lives in a Godly way.

Is it enough?

In Tom Wright’s book *Surprised by Hope* p 219/20

God takes our skills, our personality, our interests, and he makes them **more** as we offer them to him.

Freedom

And this becomes a place of greater freedom.

I will be free to choose better. The times when God is not making it clear to me what to do, I will draw on the experience I have of knowing myself and of walking with God and I will choose in a way that suits my shape – *even if it would not be the best choice for someone else, or even for me at a different time in my life.*

Theme song – your name

Is your theme song healthy or unhealthy.

They often come from childhood but can be changed.

What does God say about this?

I am just....

If we devalue what we are, it’s very likely to lead to sin of sloth – being inwardly lazy and passive.

Am I enough?

If I don’t think what I have to offer is **enough** – I may not bother offering it at all. This is a HUGE loss to the world and an insult to the ordinary things of life.

Maximise your life?

Be aware of what cultural messages are doing to you

What are you **practicing**?

Gal 6:4 “Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don’t be impressed with yourself. Don’t compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.” The Message

Shaping our futures

Every day of our lives we are shaping our futures.

— Howard Washington Thurman who was an influential African-American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader 1899-1981

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

“There is something in every one of you that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself. It is the only true guide you will ever have. And if you cannot hear it, you will all of your life spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls.”

This is not just an individualistic indulgence, it builds stronger, healthier, caring communities.

- What are some of the elements of your personal ‘package’?
- What is your theme song?
- What are you ‘practicing’?