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The Citadel of Self-Dependency

Psychology says that most people live in denial, and the way most eradicate their pain is by denying it. *"Pain—denial, pain—denial, pain—denial...then eventually, no pain."* We deceive ourselves through mental denial until eventually there is no pain. Yet, the pain in life is never really dealt with by denying it, it is still there buried deep within our subconscious, although, it seemingly is gone away for the time being. Or is it? Why do we react the way we do, or why do we have so much fear and resistance to anything negative? And why are there so many walls of self defense? Why won't we let others in, especially the ones we love? Why is it so easy to cut others out of our lives? And why is our life shrouded in shadows of secrecy?

Little do we know is that pain is God's gift to awaken us to a problem far deeper than the secondary reactions we call painful soulful hurts. Carl Barth said in the chapter, "Jesus and Judas," from *Come Holy Spirit* that "...at the deepest, the most hidden, the most inward part in us, an ultimate Bastille, so to speak, an unconquerable citadel, a mighty fortress lifts its walls."¹ That is the throne of the able Independent-self, the separate self that reigns as lord and master of its own life. Again Barth said, "In this fortress we are ourselves, without any good or evil additions here we are alone with ourselves. Behind this wall, in this fortress, dwells our 'I.' Thence it goes forth, to it, it

retreats. There it hides itself, there it sighs and suffers, there it defies and triumphs. This wall must be shaken, this fortified city must be overcome, must be stormed and broken down."² Otherwise, the "ME" in its supposed independence is not conquered.

He goes on, "*There*, in the inner place, something else, the defiant, crafty 'I' of man reigns, which has not yet fully surrendered itself, which still remains for itself, which still wants to be something by itself, not fully good nor fully bad. As long as this 'I' sits in this fortress, all this busy chasing and running after the good is futile. This fortress must be stormed, this human place must finally surrender, must allow itself to be overcome. Before that happens, the good will never be king on earth."³

"Many battles are fought out in our lives, but the final, the decisive crisis is not in these conflicts, even though they may wage fiercely. That final conflict results only when the fight for the inner citadel takes place. All others are preliminary skirmishes, not the skirmish that takes place before the real inner position."⁴

The day comes though, when all that deep pain, hidden behind the mighty fortresses of self-defense, has to come to the surface. That day is a terrible earthshaking day—it is your own personal "Day of the Lord." That day is a day of darkness, a day of many tears, and a day when the guarded walls of our inner

being have to tumble to its death. This is the terrible, most awesome “Day of the Lord.”

Thankfully, this battle is not ours, but God’s. There is no way that any of us can give up this fortified city of undiscovered Satanic self. It is the only self I have ever known. And the pain that this self has experienced in its life has happened to that “ME”—that hurtful, pitying, resentful, fearful, shame-filled, unforgiving, self-centered, but innocent, not-so-bad “ME.” I’ll hold on to that me, thank you very much. Yet, God is faithful and not lacking in mercy. His mercy shakes all that can be shaken. Will He have mercy on the precious human me? You bet—although, you *will* be shaken, but not lost; for, the purposed shaking (Hebrews 12:27) will save you and deliver you! From what? From Satan’s false strong-hold on your identity.

There will be no mercy given to “*the sin that dwells in me*” (Romans 7:17)—that monstrosity, masked and disguised as “a good me.” There is no saving it. It has to die, because it was crucified with Christ. It is Satan, “the one who would do good,” (Romans 7:21, NAS) reigning in my members, disguising himself as me. Why does Satan still have a place in the Christian—isn’t *justification* enough? No. It is only when we know *unification* with Christ through His death, burial, resurrection, and glorification, can we be free from the lying deceit of self-sufficiency, for ironically, that is where Satan hides, and finds his manifested forms in us.

Christians know justification by faith, but rarely do Christians know unification by faith. We are one with Christ—not two, but one. There are two, yet like the marriage ceremony declares, *“The two shall become one flesh”* (Eph. 5:30). Since we don’t know that we are in union with Christ, we act as if we are still “the old man” (Satan in us). We are acting from a lie, and live as if the lie is the truth, which puts real definition to the word, deception.

Somewhere, that fortified city of self-goodness must be exposed to its evil roots. Paul’s exposure happened in Romans 7: *“When I would do good, evil is present with me”* (Romans 7:21). The NAS translation says it this way: “I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.” Paul saw that the one who tries to do good in him is the presence of the evil one working in his soulish members. Satan said in his heart, *“I will be like the most High God”* (Isaiah 14:14). He wasn’t trying to be evil; he was trying to be good. But trying to do good by fleshly self-effort is evil, and is the unconquerable citadel and fortified city of evil-doing which we call our own goodness.

Who wants to see that self-generated goodness is evil?—not the religious good who are proud of their own self-accomplishments. It is only the weary, the beaten up, the broken, and the conditioned by the Holy Spirit who can or even want to see the truth. A prostitute who was weary from trying to deliver

herself from drugs and prostitution, cried out to God, "Please, God deliver me, but you are not getting any help from me." God waits for such conviction. She knew that she was too helpless to help God, or even have Him help her. She asked Him to do *all* the work, and He did.

The Day of the Lord, comes as a thief in the night, however, this thief steals away only the "wood, stubble, and hay," that is, all the sacred trophies stored up to magnify and glorify sufficient, separated self. Peter's "*Day of the Lord*," came when Jesus said to him, "Satan desires to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you." Peter falsely thought that he was so good that he would never deny Jesus. God had to prove to him that he had no strength or goodness of his own. "*The Day of the Lord*" came in Job's life, when God asked Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?" Job's problem in 37 chapters of arguing with man and God was that he didn't know that he was a simple vessel, and not his own righteousness. It's a hard lesson to learn—simple in concept—but it will cost you everything to really know that you are the cup and Christ is the content. Job, like most of us, found that out the hard way.

Most Christians focus on outer manifestation, i.e. our good works. What most don't see is that their outer activity is the secondary result of inner receptivity. All outer activity is either the result of receiving by faith the power of Christ within us, or the result of receiving the lie of self-activity based on self-generated

power, which has a Satanic source. But never are we alone manifesting good works. That is impossible.

That is the hard lesson that the book of Job, the model normal Christian life, brings out so plainly. Job didn't know that he was only a weak vessel and not the god in the vessel. He didn't know that his only activity was simply *receptivity*. Outer manifestation flows out of receptivity like living water flowing out of a fountain that never runs dry. God finally spoke to Job, and reminded him that only God is God—man is not God. Job repented, or changed his mind to the truth concerning his vessel-hood. *"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:5-6). He abhorred himself because that self was an illusionary, false self. Now with opened eyes, he accepted his vessel-hood, and worshiped God for who God truly was.

Jesus declares, *"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it"* (Matthew 16:25). The Day of the Lord comes requiring "OUR LIFE." How can I give up my life? Jesus also says, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, mother....yea, and *his own life* also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). There again, Jesus is demanding our life. Yet, on the other hand, Jesus says to the Pharisees to "love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind...and...thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself* (Matt.22:37-39).

First, Jesus tells us to lose ourselves, then hate ourselves, yet love God and others as we love ourselves? Which is it Jesus?

All of the above are true. Truth always yields itself in pairs of opposites. We, thankfully *lose* that proud, separated self when we recognize ourselves crucified with Christ, and Him living on our behalf. And we do *hate* that Satanic, sufficient self, filled with its own works of self-generated trophies of goodness, and idols of family ownership and possessiveness. Yet, on the other hand, we love the Christ-indwelt self—detached from family and things—the right-self, the one we really are, and subsequently, the only self who can love his neighbor and his God as himself. Yet, ironically, Jesus is talking about the same human self in all the above verses; however, our vessel-self is either filled with Satan’s self-centered life, which is really not life at all, or Christ’s other-love “agape” life.

I love the fact that Christ exchanged lives with us at the Cross—the Satanic-self for the Christ-self. *“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin”* (Romans 6:6 NAS).

Self-improvement can never change us; self-knowledge can never rearrange our thinking enough to help us; psychology can never enlighten us enough to change the fallen self, for that fallen self

must be put to death. The only way the self is improved is through death. What? Does that mean that I have to try to die to myself? Many a weary Christian has tried that path, only to find out that it is futile.

Thanks be to God, we humans could never do that. God in His infinite wisdom did it for us through His sinless son on the Cross. Jesus, being a partaker of flesh and blood, through death *“destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Hebrews 2:14-15). Jesus was made sin, that we might be made His righteousness (II Corinthians 5:21). Jesus took on the Satanic union (humanity joined to Satan), and through death He destroyed that union, in order to bring us into union with Christ. Old marriage gone, new marriage in.

Now due to Christ’s *“obedience unto death”* (Philippians 2:8), believing mankind can inherit His life which is righteous and holy. Romans 6:2 declares that we are *“dead to sin”*; Romans 7:4 says that we are *“dead to the law”*; Ephesians 4:22-24 states that, *“Ye have put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye have put on the new self which after God is*

created in righteousness and true holiness”; Colossians 3:9b (NAS) says, *“you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him”*; Galatians 5:24 (NAS) says, *“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”*; and Galatians 6:14 says, *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*

Christians are crucified to Satan in them (Gal. 2:20), to sin (Rom. 6:2), to the law (a trying self) (Rom. 7:4); to fleshly thinking (Gal. 5:24); and to the world (Gal. 6:14). This is a fact, but in order to actualize this fact into a living reality, we must declare it by faith. It isn't experienced by our works, but by faith. The work has already been done by Jesus. Galatians 2:20 says, *“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”*

The word *mortify* occurs twice in the New Testament—in Romans 8:13; and in Colossians 3:5. “Mortify” is a King James word, and to most that word sounds like we have to work hard to rid ourselves of our own self-activity. It is true that *self-active-self is the root cause of sinful behaviors*, but *“he that is dead is free*

from sin" (Romans 6:7). So, the only way to be free from sin is to know that you are dead. Colossians 3:3 declares it—you are dead, and Christ is your life. So, how can we be dead?

The New American Standard translates the word "mortify" in Colossians more clearly: *"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires..."* Take it by faith, and for granted that you are already dead to *"immorality..."* These sinful misuses are *not* who you are. Through the deliverance of the Cross, you are really joined to Christ's holiness, and *"dead to sin"* (Romans 6:2).

The NAS translates the Romans use of the word "mortify" this way: "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but *if by the Spirit* you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Both the verse in Romans and in Colossians are exhorting us to declare by faith what is already done by Christ. We are to trust the Spirit to put to death in us what we have already died to, in Christ. Our part is to just receive it, believe it, declare it and stand fast in the liberty that Christ has already set us free. We affirm it, and God confirms it, and causes it to make a manifested form in us.

When Jesus said, "It is finished", he meant just that—IT IS FINISHED. Miss Bertha, an old missionary from Cowpens, South Carolina, after discovering these truths, confessed, "I know it,

God knows it, and the devil knows that I have swapped lives with Jesus Christ.” Your life is not your life; it is the life of Christ living and being Himself as you. It is only as we know who we really are that we will ever live a life of peace, and satisfaction. Self-love and self-appreciation come into manifestation as we freely live and love as Christ lives and loves.

All the pain from our childhood, all our heartbreaking losses as adults all the hurts and every seemingly irreconcilable event in our lives becomes a living testimony to the presence of the indwelling Christ. I always say that “God meant” (Genesis 50:20) all my holes of insecurity, and scars of shame. Pain is God’s megaphone to first arouse a deaf world to reach for the invisible God, instead of trusting and living off of this visible world. As we take Christ, and see Him in all our pain, then He takes those very “holes of insecurity” and “scars of shame” and by His life heals us by filling us up with Himself. What a God!

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¹ Barth, Carl and Thurneysen, Eduard. *Come Holy Spirit*. Translated by George W. Richards and Elmer G. Homrighausen and Karl J. Ernst. Edinbergh: T. & T. CLARK, 1934. Pg. 124.

² Barth and Thurneysen, 124.

³ Barth and Thurneysen, 126.

⁴ Barth and Thurneysen, 124.