

ENDING PERFORMANCE

March 29, 2015

When we come to Jesus, we get a new identity that will get lost as we perform, but will thrive as we rest in who He created us to be.

- Our identity cannot be based on lies, feelings or how others see us.
- Our identity must be based on who the Father created us to be.
- The moment you start performing is the moment you stop being YOU.

Performance Definitions:

- An act of staging or presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment
- A person's rendering of a dramatic role, song, or piece of music
- A display of exaggerated behavior or a process involving a great deal of unnecessary time and effort

Acting is being

- You don't pretend to be the character, you become the character so it's believable—how would they see, talk, respond, think, etc. (Daniel Day Lewis)
- In *Taming of the Shrew*, I played Vincentio (SHOW PICTURES).
- Acting is becoming someone that you are not.

Many who know Jesus live their lives performing for our heavenly Father

- Our relationship with God is not based on our performance.
- When we live in performance it builds a barrier between Him and us.

Signs of Living in Performance

YOU ARE ACTING UNLOVED WHEN YOU ARE LOVED

- Someone who believes they are not loved will perform to receive love.
- Performance-based thinking: How you feel about yourself is based on how well you perform your daily duties: "If I don't do well, I will not be loved."
- You train yourself to give people what they want in order to receive their love.
- Performing to earn someone's love causes you to treat the Father the same way.
- We don't have to go around and around in circles trying to make God happy—His love is pure and without any selfish or deceptive motive.
- John 3:16 – "*For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world...*"—it doesn't say "The world met God's standards so He gave His Son..."
- 1 John 4:19 (NIV) – "*We love because he first loved us*"—His love is not a response to ours!

- Jeremiah 31:3 (MSG) – *“I’ve never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love and more love!”*
- Pastor Dave: *“When you live loved, you have nothing to earn and nothing to prove.”*
- When we speak of the Father’s love, it is always WITHOUT CONDITIONS!

YOU ARE ACTING UNACCEPTED WHEN YOU ARE ACCEPTED

- Someone who believes they are not accepted will perform to EARN acceptance.
- Performance-based thinking: You are discouraged when you think you haven’t met God’s expectations for you.
- You believe you have to earn your way into the Father’s favor by what you do.
- God’s gift to you is all grace, freely given—impossible to earn.

Ephesians 1:3-8, 11 (NLT) – *“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.”*

Where is performance in this passage—what we must get right before being accepted?

- We are blessed because we are united with Christ—we are in Him.
- He didn’t first see us then love us, choose us and bring us into His family—He decided it ahead of time.
- Why did He do all this? Because He wanted to!
- The Bible tells us to do good works, to pray, to meditate on the Bible, but we don’t do them FOR God—we do it for ourselves because it connects us to Him, strengthens us, gives us wisdom, helps us live our lives fully.
- Our best good works for the Lord will never be enough to earn God’s love or acceptance—He is good and gives it to us freely.
- When we do good works we don’t do them to get something from God but because of what He’s done for us and to glorify Him—it’s not to get but to give.
- Romans 3:27 (NLT) – *“Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith.”*

Performing for acceptance is the heart of an orphan, not a son.

- Orphans strive for the attention of their new parent.

- They want to do things right so they have a place to belong—a family.

Romans 8:15 (NLT) – *“So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father.’”*

- An adopted child takes on the family name and inherits all that belongs to the father and other siblings.
- In Paul’s day, a father could disown his natural son, but not his adopted son—the bond could not be broken.
- We are sons NOW—this is not something that is off in the future.
- We are welcomed into a place that we weren’t born into and didn’t belong.
- 1 John 3:1-2 – *“Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God.”*
- When people look to adopt, they want the adorable, meek and obedient child—would I consider a child who would kill pets, set my house on fire...
- God chose that orphan—the non-beautiful, mis-behaved, rebellious one with a criminal record—that’s why John says, *“Behold”!*

PERFORMANCE IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

- There are people in our lives—this church, work, neighborhood—that are challenging people but they are looking to be accepted and belong.
- Jesus had a group of challenging people that followed Him—emotionally needy, sick, and immature and some were His closest relationships.
- None of them had to perform to be received—He sent none of them away.
- Holding love and acceptance from others breeds performance—not His heart.
- Parents – you lay a foundation for your children to trust in the unconditional love of the Father when your love toward them is unconditional.

Living Free of Performance

Matthew 11:28 (NIV) - *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

- *“Come to Me”* – making Christ your companion—being His disciple
- *“Weary and burdened”* – participating in exhausting labor
- Pharisees and scribes weighed people down with unbearable religious demands, traditions and awareness of their sins—they did nothing to lift this load.
- This verse is a picture of someone exhausted and weighed down from these burdens.
- They are laboring until they are weary in order to obtain peace and rest.
- *Rest* – a rest that marks the end of laboring and the refreshing of the soul

- Jesus comes and says, “I have a better way! Come to Me (give yourself to Me—let’s be companions) and I’ll remove the burdens, the laboring to get it right and I’ll restore and refresh your soul. How does that sound?”
- We must be people of His presence (connected to Him), not performance.
- All our efforts must come from a place of rest.
- If we did nothing but live in a cave and pray for the rest of our lives He would love us the same than if we held crusades for 1000’s of people.
- At the triumphal entry, Jesus was not giving in to the pressure of man to be their idea of a king—a physical king who would overthrow their enemies.
- He rested in who the Father created Him to be and what He was sent to do.
- When you live in that place, there is no room for performance.

Matthew 11:28 (MSG) – “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”