

LIFE IN RECOVERY – Confidence

Lord ... You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

The first step in developing confidence is acknowledging that God is our creator and each one of us is individually made with special qualities. As members of the human family, we are extraordinarily gifted because we are made in the image of an awesome God. God sees before He creates and, in His foreknowledge of us, He created each of us as the unique person that we are. He also equipped us with the potential to fulfill the plan He has for our lives. There is nothing haphazard in anything that God does. He is at work fulfilling His eternal plan.

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. (Acts 17:26 NIV)

God has given gifts to everyone; no one has been left out. The gifts He gives are not solely for our own benefit but purposely for the good of others. As believers in Jesus we are to eagerly participate in what God is doing. When we first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness then everything that is needed to fulfill God's plan for our lives will be provided. God promises to help us; He affirms us in what He has given us to do. Are you and I willing to step forward, confident in who God says we are? Are we willing to follow His ways and the plan He has for each of us. Have we resolved to "PUT OFF" the old pessimistic self and "PUT ON" the new confident self who is created in God's likeness?

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

In order to improve our confidence we often have to demonstrate to ourselves that we can actually achieve what we set out to do. How do we do that? We take a risk and do something we haven't done before. We leave the safety and security of our comfort zone in order to achieve something new. This might mean having a talk with a counselor or pastor, signing up for a class, volunteering our time, doing service work in a support group, participating in a Bible fellowship group, applying for a job or training course, etc. We will never grow in confidence if we stay in our comfort zone. We develop confidence by gritting our teeth and declaring, "If I am marvelously made, and if I have all this divine potential within me, I'm going to try something new and see what happens." Then, as the slogan says "Just Do It"!

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16 NIV)

If we isolate any one part of a human body and examine it, it may seem odd and useless. Only when we are connected to a community of people and doing our appointed job do we fully realize our usefulness and grow in our confidence about who we are and where we belong. **Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.** (Romans 12:4-6a NLT)

Once we have built up our own confidence, we need to become "confidence builders" for each other. People who are in relationship need to communicate with one another in a positive way. We need to stretch each other and challenge each other to take a confident step and even take a risk for the sake of growth. We need to be there for each other when the challenge is accepted. We need to compliment and express gratitude to those around us who are making good use of their skills and talents. We need to faithfully stay alongside others as they learn through their stumbles and their failures. No one ever gets everything right the first time. Confidence crushing comes when we criticize or walk out on someone when they have failed. Failures and stumbles should be placed within the context of the journey of growth.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. (Philippians 2:1-2 NLT)

Jesus risked rejection and powerlessness when He left heaven to enable the relationship between us and our Heavenly Father to be restored. He took the risk of going to the cross and trusted His Father to strengthen the wishy-washy disciples who deserted Him and then hid in fear. With full knowledge that Peter would betray Him, Jesus built confidence into Peter by praying for him that his faith would not fail and that he would strengthen his brothers. Peter later repented of his failure and grew into an amazing leader. Jesus took time to build confidence in others. He is a role model for us. **Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.** (Luke 22:31-32 NLT)

Am I willing to affirm what God says about me and seek His strength to live confidently in that truth? Am I willing to follow Jesus' example by taking the time to build confidence in others?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How am I growing in confidence?
2. How am I supporting the growth of confidence in others around me?