

01282024 Response Flexibility is the path to freedom Freedom happens when we can Pause between Stimulus and Response

There is a saying...preach the Gospel everywhere and if needed use words...What it means is this....“If the world will not listen to your words, make them listen to your lives.” The Church, serves as repairers of the breach, that which divides and separates us...from God , ourselves and eachother...

Therefore I must be intentional at working through the impact of my attitude and actions on my relationships. “Whether you know it or not, or admit or not, you’re being watched. And the things you model - - powerfully communicate your convictions about right or wrong, about morality and immorality. If you want to pass on Biblical values to others, you must model these values in your own life.”

- Here is the deal one cannot be Spiritually mature ...strong in the Lord while being emotionally immature...prideful and selfish immature in our relationships...
- Spiritual maturity has to do with navigating life on earth by heavenly principles.. Emotional maturity has to do with my ability to implement those principles in my relationships

One of the key ways we demonstrate Godly emotional maturity is what I call Response Flexibility. Response Flexibility the ability to pause between stimulus and response...

It is the opposite of is reacting rigidly to a stimulus ...for example defensively when we experience criticism, because that is what we always do...Rather than pausing before response...to check myself...am I listening to what they said...is there truth? Am I listening empathetically? What would be a proper response?

Response Flexibility the ability to pause between stimulus and response...

Thinking about what were thinking before we speak...put another way...you cant play varity fottbal with a freshman mentality!

This Self awareness is the path to learning Response flexibility...how ...but is the path forward....remembering how I was formed...guides me on the path to being reformed last week

- I can't master myself unless I know myself...the only way to know yourself to examine myself...it is a great gift to finally "get me"!
- Tha is why I do what I do....;because I think like I think...Through Christ I can think differently...I can think God thoughts!!
- Response flexibility enables us to respond flexibly to stimulus... I have choices....I have freedom! I gain wisdom!
- Two weeks ago if we check our self talk... pausing to become aware of what we are saying to ourselves. whether it is wholesome, true, factual, in line with God's words...
- if we check our self talk... pausing to become aware of what we are saying to ourselves. Pausing to see if it is in line with God's words...

This is what Jesus calls us too....a transformed mind...capable to process life in the present not being driven by a frozen in time past...thinking

NLT Romans 12:2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God **transform** you into a new person by changing *the way* you think.

- **The way you thinkNot just believing your thinking as it was formed in your life as a default....**
- **I must learn to unfreeze my locked in ways of responding to life....**

- **What does that look like....Our thinking is not mainly only about yourself!**
- **We do that by asking ourselves The right question? What kind of question should I ask myself when I want to pause at what I am thinking.... Does this thought line up with God's thought on the subject?**

And when it does not I have to master My Response and that creates flexibility.... Response Flexibility is the ability to choose how we address life's inevitable ups and downs its disappointments, triumphs and challenges...

We must learn to respond to our preprogrammed thinking about how to handle life, with the ability to pause between stimulus and response...

My dad had a successful tire business, being a co-owner of four stores...with a plan in place to open another within the year and more to follow, he was well on his way to becoming wealthy...and fulfilling his goal of overcoming the poverty he grew up in...well on the way to fulfilling the dream he spent his life chasing...but at the age of 48 he received his death sentence...he was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer and given the devastating news that if he was lucky he had a year to live. He was married, a business partner and owner, and had eight children living at home ranging in age from 5-17 years old and all in parochial elementary or high school...and he was dying...That was the truth...

All his plans and **preprogrammed thinking about how life would turn out left him spiritually, emotionally relationally frozen. He would have to unfreeze his locked in ways of responding to life ...**

Responding to the stimulus of his past in the present ...missing the present for the hope of the future...to accomplish position so his self worth would be proven by his success Living for this future locked into this mindset compensating for the wounds of his upbringing came at a great price the personal relationship with his children, proper care of his body, great relational struggles in his marriage, rage issues....few friends ... locked in to compensating for the wounds of his upbringing....

Now His future life goals were no longer a possibility... For the present was now his future... if he could not develop a different mindset....His passing would have been more devastating than it was...Response Flexibility to pause between stimulus (Pancreatic cancer) and his response...we were all in great trouble...but he got unfrozen...in his mind set...this devastating news caused him to Pause...rethink his life...and the way he did life...

His great ability to Respond flexibly to pause between the stimulus and response to that stimulus created freedom in this most devastating experience....enabled him to choose a response that gave his family even though he would not live to experience it himself...and the pause enabled him to reconnected to God...and come to a peace inside himself that he had never been able to find...

I remember shortly after the diagnosis he and my mom going to the cemetery to purchase plots for not only my dad, but he purchased one for my mom, and two for his parents not knowing then, that his own father would die with a few months, and another for his mentally disabled brother...and even an extra double one in case any of his children should they pass at a young age...that plot is the one that holds my son's and

daughter's bodies ...as they were the first two to go to heaven of the next two generations... my dad is a good man!

During those last month's I can remember twice my dad spreading out on the dining room table... all the paper work my mom would need to become familiar with and educated about as the time of his leaving was approaching

He spread the paperwork out in columns on the kitchen table for my mom to become familiar with... one column had all his life insurances policies, another business papers and contracts, another the mortgage documents and car payment, another the medical bills... another his social security paperwork, and the last his mortuary documents... explaining to my mom as she took notes... all that she needed to do and when things ought to be paid...and what she should expect to receive and live on financially... I remember them going to the accountant, and overhearing my dad tell my mother that if she was careful, she would be able to keep our home, and continue to be a stay at home mom raising all their children! My mom followed all my dad instructions...and it worked out just as he planned!

What changes he went from thinking mainly about his own motives...to thinking about us... self to others... **which enabled him to refocus on the future care of his loved ones... rather than his... or freezing in victimhood.. if he could not have paused and refocused...his family would have suffered far greater damage on top of losing him..He took care of his family as best he could...the one God gave him responsibility for...Bless Him!! My Dad finished Well!!**

ESV MAL 4:6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers...

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He had enough Jesus to pause and rethink his ways of thinking about life... **Jesus taught an important message that He lived out Himself. He said....** *NLT Mark 10: 42 So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.*

- **Our natural tendency is to seek to be esteemed by others...but Jesus says that is the absolute wrong way to go about being esteemed**
- **For many reasons...but a main one is to prove our value...**

⁴³ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus said Esteem comes from serving others....

If God manifest in flesh could serve, we can too. If we want to be great in His eyes, we must fulfill God’s will whose eyes do you want to be great in?

So the question is how do we do change the way we think? I must learn to think Jesus thoughts....

ESV Philippians’ [2:5](#) is the commonly quoted scripture: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”

But what does that really mean? What mind was in Christ Jesus?

If you notice, the verse ends with a semi colon rather than a period, because it is not the end of the sentence or the completion of the thought. In the following verses, the scripture breaks down for us what [Christ thought and what he did because of that thinking...the mindset He possessed.](#)

#1: Jesus Christ made Himself of no reputation...he was not trying to build a reputation, nor maintain a reputation...

NLT Phil 2:6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;

- **Jesus is, the Almighty God, so it is amazing (and removes all of our excuses for pride) to find that the Bible tells us that He “gave up all His divine privileges”..... refocused mindset**
- **He chose to give up His position of King, and All his kingly royal privileges’ including his angelic army, his requiring all to hold him In highest regard as to bow before his presence, to approach him very carefully, because of His celebrity and status, to treat him as God with greatest reverence....as the Most High!**
- **But Jesus did exactly that, *even though He was fully God and deserved all those privileges...***

NLT [Isaiah 53:2-3](#) describe Him like this: My servant grew up in the LORD’s presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.³ He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

Notice: on a physical level....He was not majestic or impressive or handsome, he did not stand out in any way physically.... On an emotional level... He was rejected and sad often and experienced the

deepest grief or heart ache. **Relationally** If *anyone* should have been accepted it was him for Josephus the Roman historian wrote he was known for doing good, but he was hated...he should have been celebrated, and cherished, but people looked the other way...ignored he was there... when he was beaten and put on trial no one cared to speak up for him or help him... he did not care!!! For is the path he choose on earth to live for our good..

- We have to transform our thinking to have the mind of Christ, when we are free to pause between stimulus and response ...we are truly free!!

Jesus had the ability ...the great emotional ability to pause and choose His emotional response over emotional stimulus...in other words ...

- When emotional pain was experienced from personal rejectionhe chose to love....when tempted he chose to obey...
- If we were picking our life's trajectory before being born, writing out the plan, and choosing our position in the social rankings, most of us would *not* select the option at the bottom of the ladder "to a position as a slave."

But that is what he did... His mindset was to take and hold that as his way of life.... He knew who he was, what he stood for...there were numerous options in how he responded...but he simply said what his position was...a a slave!

#2: He took upon Him position of a slave...and was born a human....
NLT Phil 2:7.... he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

Christ "took the form of a "humble position of servant" in the body of a human being! Jesus be

****Greek word for servant or slave to be under the complete authority of another

Christ “took the form of a “humble position of servant” in the body of a human being! Jesus who is God...over all creation...took on the form of a human under the authority of a lower being...

He was not **forced** into this position nor condition... but chose it!! and it was not the only option He had. And it is not the only option we have either...

And he demonstrated this mindset...by obedience through all things he encountered...all relationships he was involved in...all adversityeven unto death...all the way....

NLT Phil 2:8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

Even to be killed as a criminal when he was not a criminal...why? His mindset was about others....when his thinking was about himself....he took it captive....

What would Jesus do is the mindset for greatness in all things! How ...Because God will consider you great!!

Choose what kind of Greatness you want?

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