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Living in Our World: Two Rooms

I Cor. 5:17,21

Heb. 11:6

Gal. 3:5

Dr. Tim Brannagan, Director of Story-centric Strategies, ReachGlobal

Just as in the story of Adam and Eve who hid themselves from God when they discovered they had no clothing on, we live out the same principle of struggling with our need for acceptance by many means: pretending, wearing masks, feeling embarrassed, ashamed, condemned, anxious, fearful. We struggle to do things to make us look more than we are to be accepted.

The classic Christmas song “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” rings in our ears: Are we naughty or nice? How much good or bad do we need to do to be accepted? Even as we walk through life as Christians, we might face a time when we think God might not like us any more and might punish us because we somehow do not measure up. We come to a fork in the road where a signpost forces us to choose between two paths: **1. pleasing God and 2. trusting God**. Our choice will set on track the primary motivations of our hearts.

The path of pleasing God leads us to a building labeled: “Striving for all God wants me to be”. We enter a room of people who are full of encouragement and good intentions, all saying “I’m fine!” A banner reads: “Working on my sin to achieve an intimate relationship with God.” We stumble back to the fork in the road in dejection because we know it’s not working; we cannot please God.

The path of trusting God leads us to a second room with a door handle labeled “Humility” where a sign reads “Living Out of Who God Says I Am”. We think, “God, I’m not fine. If you knew half the thoughts in my mind, you wouldn’t want me here. I’m toast if you do not show up and help me.” The room hostess says, “You are welcome here.” There is no more need for masks, controlling rules (**Gal.3:5**), only truth. When God sees us, He knows all our flaws and loves us totally in spite of them because of the perfect work of Jesus Christ in us (**II Cor. 5: 21**). God frees us up from our self centeredness to an intimate relationship with our God, who loves us exactly as we are (Grace).

By our choosing to trust God, we become new creations (**II Cor. 5:17**) with our sins no longer counting against us (**II Cor. 5: 17, 19**). The perfect Son of God Himself has stepped in between our inadequacies and our relationship with God. Jesus’ work to pay for our sin is finished. The Father sees only the perfect work of His Son in us and is pleased with our faith (**Heb. 11:6**). The work of the Holy Spirit guides and strengthens us to live day by day. Now we can finally be truly ourselves, intimate with our God who loves us as we are. Godliness is no longer all about us and what we do, but about our delight (not duty) to serve God without fear, shame or guilt. We daily and openly work out our sin together with Him and are continually transformed to become what He created us to become as His sons and daughters.

Discussion Questions:

1. We make choices all the time, but sometimes we just let life drift along, not seeing or ignoring the choice. Why is it critical to choose the path of trusting God instead of the path of pleasing God, or just doing nothing? Do we have help in the choosing?
2. Although It’s poetic to picture two paths, exactly what does it mean to choose a path in your own daily life? How do you do it? How is your will involved? How often do you choose?

3. How is the need to “please” God keeping you from knowing the joy of your salvation?
4. If we truly believe we are priceless to God, why are we so concerned what the world thinks of us?
5. How does grace show itself in your life? Do you serve a judging God or a merciful one?