

Breaking self-unlove with God's Love (Part 4)

by Lisa Swanepoel

Hey Sis! I can't believe that we're already on the final chapter of Breaking Self-Unlove with God's love, with the last two topics needing to be unpacked (see parts 1-3 in our March, May and July 2022 Issues!). It has been such a beautiful experience walking this journey with you, but I must admit that I've been taken on quite interesting mental and emotional adventures while learning how to break my self-unlove with God's love.

At times I feel as though I am intentionally put through experiences, whether good or bad, so that I can come and share my learnings with you from a place of raw truth and heartfelt emotion.

I say raw truth and heartfelt emotion because I write this recently coming from a place of back-and-forth with God, understanding that all my trials are character-shaping, building and strengthening but not losing sight of the reality that refining, at times, can be painful. And I've yet to find a person that smiles through pain.

However, a promise to hold onto, that the pain we go through will be worked together for our own good, is definitely one that levitates the hurt.

So let me introduce the first topic for this article by saying, Plot Twist!

Remember in the previous issue when I made reference to a journey with God never being a straight line, but instead the journey sometimes includes a tar road switching over to gravel which could include some pit stops to pick flowers? Well, this issue is part of the journey where our destination looks differently to what we had imagined because we only know in part and essentially God's bigger picture is too powerful for us to fully comprehend in one go.

Our next stop is therefore: Self-Love and the final destination will be Self-Confidence.

In my own understanding the final stop of this breaking self-unlove with God's love journey should've been Self-Love. However, writing this I kept questioning if it's possible to have self-confidence before having self-love because when I reflect on my personal journey, my self-love is what allows me to operate from a place of self-confidence because my self-love is God-centred.

Now, living in a world that is self-centred, the word self-love is not taken lightly. Self-love is defined as the regard for one's own well-being and happiness.

Living a life where the concern for your own well-being and happiness is top priority can look different from one person to another. But for myself, it is important to remember that when self-love is prioritised, I should keep focus on not loving myself more than loving God.

Loving myself more than loving God can cause me to entertain and justify thoughts, emotions and actions that are aligned with my own desires and not the desires laid on my heart by my Heavenly Father. This is something that requires daily surrender, and I know that surrender can be something difficult to surrender to.

Every day I have to **consciously make the choice** that it is in fact my desires but, to glorify God, and if my desires do not or will not glorify God then I will surrender my desires and allow God to replace it with what will glorify Him. I put emphasis on 'consciously make the choice' because leading up to this final issue, the Holy Spirit has been showing me the role in which the Freedom of Choice that God has given us plays in love.

Freedom because Jesus has set us free so as we live in Christ we live freely to either choose the will of our own or the will of God.

Choice and not Will, because choice is the act of choosing between two or more possibilities, whereas Will is the capability to choose.

When I face having to surrender my own desires for those that will glorify God, it's not always easy and there's often a wrestle within myself to not act out of emotions and do things accordingly, but instead be patient and wait on the Lord. One day when I wanted to act out of impatient emotion fuelled by my own desire, it felt like God was telling me "I need you to understand what it's like to be chosen because only then will you understand what it's like to be loved. I chose you, Lisa, because I love you."

And as much as I replied, "But I do love you, too, God.", it's like I wasn't fully grasping what God was trying to teach me, until I grasped it.

Even though God knows that I love Him, it is the same way that I could know a person loves me.

But when my love is not being displayed in my actions to God, it is the same way that my heart will yearn for the love to be shown and made known in actions toward me from the person I love.

That emphasised how important freedom of choice is that God has given us.

It's the act of doing beyond knowing, in order to make it known.

Knowing is you internally choosing to love but the act of choosing is making your choice to love known externally.

That is what makes love Love, choosing to love and choosing to be loved and not just knowing that you love and are loved.

To choose is to love and to be chosen is to be loved. And in that we have a choice to love and a choice to be loved.

To put God at the centre of your understanding when trying to prioritise your own well-being and happiness, you can look at self-love from the perspective of giving yourself the choice to be loved the same way in which God loves you.

Yes, right now I'm also asking myself how do I give myself the choice to be loved the same way in which God loves me?

But the answer is simple, build a relationship with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to show you and teach you.

Many of us have a desire to be loved but do we understand how we should be loved versus how we want to be loved?

In order for me to understand this, I needed to learn how to cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit that would resemble the relationships I desire, be it with family, friends or my future husband. I needed to partner with the Holy Spirit so that He could firstly teach me how it is that I should be loved, and secondly how I should reciprocate that love.

My self-confidence is therefore driven by the surrender of allowing the Holy Spirit to help establish my self-love.

Self-confidence is defined as a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities and judgement. However, on a journey of breaking self-unlove with God's love, self-confidence can be redefined into a feeling of trust in the abilities, qualities and judgement of the Holy Spirit.

I pray that God gives you the strength, courage, faith and love to persevere through the trials and endure through the refining as He continues to walk this journey with you of breaking self-unlove with His perfect love.

Until we meet again on God's zig-zag tar and gravel road that may have some pit stops to pick flowers.