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ARTICLE 5: Free To Be Responsible For Myself

In this fifth step across the bridge to freedom we have uncovered so many issues since we took that very first step crossing our imaginary bridge with Jesus. I hope you have taken time to review each of these previous articles but let us review at how far we've come..

In the first article we discussed "Why Should I Forgive Someone Who has Hurt Me? In article two we looked at "I Can Forgive But I Can't Forget." Then we dug down deeper and asked "Why Can't I Forgive Myself?" and in the previous article we discussed "Forgiving God." So today we come to the realization that through it all, we'll be addressing the topic, "Free To Be Responsible For Myself" so let's get started.

Who can say they haven't had a squabble with a brother, sister or family member at one time or another that seemed too hurtful to forgive? Be honest, haven't we all? I'd like to take a few moments and share an incident I had several years ago with one of my four brothers that devastated me, but taught me lessons in forgiveness and my responsibility to myself.

I had written my new year 'round cantata about several known people who had personal encounters with Jesus called "The Touch of Jesus", which I was so excited to share with my brother who was visiting from California. I invited him to come up to my room and listen to the demo that I had recorded with the narrations and the characters who are such a big part of the New Testament. After having heard a small portion of a leper who Jesus was soon to heal, my brother suddenly jumped up and said, "I can't take this!" and left the room and went down stairs. I was totally in shock and terribly hurt! I was terribly devastated to say the least, because I thought with him being a physician he wouldn't be offended. This body of work was and is the most important musical composition I have ever written for the Lord, and I so wanted to share it with my closest brother. The music and story line is so dramatic and moving, yet I just couldn't understand why he behaved the way he did. My reaction in retrospect was immature, because I wanted to ignore him the rest of his visit and I am sorry that I did.

Over time I came to realize that my brother didn't know Jesus and he didn't realize how much it meant to me to have him hear and share something that was so important to me. I had labored over this cantata for probably two years, putting my heart and soul into it with the main purpose of bringing souls to Christ.

After I had time to reflect on what had happened and to use the mind of Christ inside me, I thought, "How could I expect him to feel the same way about Christ or to understand the desperate cry of the leper as me? How can he understand the ways of Christ if he doesn't know Christ? Through many prayers and reading what Jesus teaches about forgiveness, I finally forgave him. I had to forgive myself for my behavior, too just as I am teaching you through all these steps we're taking with Jesus. I came to realize that I was responsible for my reactions and my behavior. No one could know what this work meant to me other than Jesus, and although my brother was insensitive, I came to realize and understand that my behavior was emotional and reactive towards him. I also came to realize how much my brother means to me. I adore him to pieces and always have. Now I hold no animosity towards the gentle, patient brother I knew as a little boy, and the man and brother I have loved all of my life and will love forever.

Being responsible for one's own self does not mean standing alone. It means standing in obedience to what God has for you to do and to accomplish while you are here on this earth. If you are not free in your spirit from wounds that have been inflicted upon you, or wounds you have inflicted on another, I pray that you will cooperate with God until you are. Once you find this freedom, you have a responsibility to maintain that freedom. And if you lose your way, remember how close God is. He is always waiting for His children to come back to His loving arms. God created us to be attached to Him. The key word is reliance, which means dependency upon His safety and direction.

God desires to change us from the inside out. He wants to renew our minds and teach us to form new habits. Isaiah is such a rich book in the Old Testament filled with God's wisdom. When we read it, God uses the example of pottery to describe how man can take God for granted, as though He were not sovereign and in control. He says to the people, "You turn things upside down as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, "He did not make me?" Can the pot say to the potter, "He knows nothing?" Isaiah 29:19.

No one can take away the holes and traumas that may have been in your childhood. The damage cannot be undone; it must be healed. Let's look also at what the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 58:11, "The Lord will guide you always. He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. Isn't God wonderful?"

Oh, to discover the glorious satisfaction in Christ Jesus! I believe when captives are truly set free they are the most compassionate people in the world. They don't see others less than themselves, because they have lived a life of suffering. There is no other person who can know us or give us the safety we find in our Creator. In Christ, we find the freedom of safety knowing that He is always closer than our very breath. Run to Him! Let Him hold you in His arms, He is your hiding place.

God is the answer to a thousand needs. He is the answer to a thousand wants. He is the fulfillment of our chief desire in all of life. He is the Good shepherd, our Deliverer and our Healer.

Walking with God gives us a bountiful treasure. It doesn't mean that we will walk perfectly in His every step. It means we may stumble, but we will not fail! Isaiah's teachings are so rich. here's what he says to God, "Be our strength every morning, our salvation in the times of distress." Isaiah 33:2. We may go from trial to trial, but He is there to give us strength.

Awaken our souls to see you, oh God! You are the One we want, not just what we need. You are our life's protection, our heart's affection. You are our soul's salvation, our exhilaration. The contemporary songs says, "Unfailing love, how can it be that you my Lord, would die for me? How amazing that You will not let us go from the palm of your hand!

My dear friend, I pray that when someone or situations arise that hurt you or devastate you, that you will turn to Jesus and ask Him to give you His wisdom to see things His way. Ask Him to give you His peace and a willingness to react responsibly offering genuine forgiveness. The Lord wants you to know that you are a beautiful display of splendor. He made no one in this world like YOU! You were miraculously and fearfully made.

While closing this article, I would like to fill your cup with one last inspiring scripture from Isaiah 40:28-31, which amazes me of the awesomeness of our God.

*"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary, and the young men stumble and fall:
but those who wait on the Lord the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on the wings on eagles;
they will not grow weary, and they will walk and not faint."*

Dear friend, If you haven't received the Lord Jesus as your Savior, or if you truly desire to return back to Him,

Let's pray:

Dearest Lord God, I so want to be like your Son and to be responsible for myself. I am a true miracle, because you made me. Please forgive me of my sins and fill me up with your scriptures, so that I will over flow with your love and knowledge. Make me strong and no longer weak. I know that I may stumble and maybe fall, but you will pick me up and help me. Thank you, Lord, for hearing and granting my prayer. In Jesus name I pray, Amen