The Law of the Mirror: presented by The Ministry of YOU: 7/9/24

We are continuing to study together with the Holy Spirit’s help, the Laws of growth. We are referencing John Maxwell’s book, The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth for our study. The Law of the Mirror is listed as the third law in his book. This law basically states that YOU must see value in yourself to add value to yourself.

John Maxwell includes in this chapter a very appropriate quote from motivational speaker, writer, and consultant, Dennis Waitley. “Personal development is the belief that you are worth the effort, time, and energy needed to develop yourself.” This sentiment is in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul wanted us to know we are worth the effort, time, and energy needed to develop ourselves. AMPC Ephesians 2:10; For we are God’s (own) handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, (born anew) that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us (taking paths which He prepared ahead of time), that we should walk in them (living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live).

The fact that we are God’s own handiwork makes us worth the effort it takes to work on our personal growth. John Maxwell said he found himself perplexed about why so many people fail to grow and reach their potential. Then he concluded that one of the main reasons is low self-esteem. Unfortunately, people don’t see the potential God has put in them. Why is so important that we see this God given potential? The Word of God answers this vital question. AMPC Proverbs 23:7; For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. The way we think about ourselves, or the way see ourselves is the way we will become.

So, if YOU don’t think or believe you can learn and grow, then YOU want. YOU won’t make any attempts to grow on a personal level. John Maxwell gives an example of the case of Johnetta McSwain. She was someone who, for more than thirty years, saw little value or potential in herself. Unfortunately, she had legitimate reasons for her poor perception of herself. She was born to a single mother who didn’t want her and told her so. The first five or six years of life she and sister were raised by her grandmother who lived in Brimingham, Alabama. In that same house was shared by her three uncles who abused them psychologically, physically, and sexually. Johnnetta was left scarred both physically and emotionally from that experience.

By this time, she stated, “I had already started to believe that I was not just inferior, but I was also a child abandoned by her own mamma.” She felt like she had no place, no voice, and no worth at all. Eventually her mom found out about the abuse and moved them to a new home. However, the abuse continued, this time from the men her mother brought home. As a result, she dropped out of high school and had her first child out of wedlock at age nineteen, then a second child in her mid-twenties. She lived in government supported housing and government assistance. In addition, she resorted to shoplifting to keep herself adorned in designer clothing.

Moreover, on her thirtieth birthday, Johnnetta took a long look in the mirror. She didn’t like what she saw. She wasn’t happy with her life, and she wanted better for herself and her sons. Not a single member of her family had ever finished high school. Many of them died young or ended up in jail. She didn’t want her sons to end up that way. She realized she had to change the direction her life was going in, or she and her sons would end up just like the rest of her family. Johnnetta started her personal growth process by working to get her GED. She took a twelve-week prep course and then took the test. She needed a score of 45 to pass. She received a 44.5. However, she was determined to make something better of herself. So, she retook the test and passed. She was chosen to speak at her graduation ceremony. No one from her family bothered to attend.

Johnnetta knew if she was going to change, she needed to change her environment. She left Birmingham to get a new start. Moreover, she had decided she wanted to do something no one in her family had ever done, she wanted to be a college graduate. She relocated to Alanta, Georgia. Her thinking about herself began to change. She thought to herself, “I get a chance to be anyone I want to be.” She was thirty-three years old when her dream was realized. She enrolled in Kennesaw State University, she decided to take more than a full load every semester.

At first, she was intimidated by the experience. But because she was determined to better herself, she soon realized that she could do it. Johnnetta explains, “I realized I didn’t have to be smart, I just had to be determined, motivated, and focused.” So, she studied hard and stayed focused. Soon she was studying and thinking like the best students in school. She maintained her vision as a college graduate by going to the bookstore at the beginning of every semester and tried on a cap and gown looking at herself in the mirror and imagining what it would be like to graduate.

A classmate of Johnnetta was talking about how she was a nobody and she didn’t love herself. Listening to her classmate, Johnnetta realized her thinking had changed. She actually loved herself now and she no longer felt inferior to anyone. She was turning into the person she wanted to be and who she was created to be. She received a bachelor's degree in three years. Then she enrolled in graduate school, where she earned a master’s degree in social work. She’s currently working toward earning her doctorate.

Johnnetta renewed or changed her previous mindset of being inferior and defeated. We are admonished in the Word of God to do the same. AMPC Romans 12:2; Do not be conformed to this world (this age), (fashioned after and adapted to it’s external, superficial customs), but be transformed (changed) by the (entire) renewal of your mind (by its new ideals and its new attitude), so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect (in His sight for you).

Dear sisters, like Johnnetta we all have come out of a world that we had been conformed to. Let’s take a closer look at the word “conform.” The word “conform” is defined in the Merriam and Webster dictionary as to be similar or identical, to act in accordance with prevailing standards or customs. AMPC Colossians 1:13; (The Father) has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love. Our Heavenly Father has done His part by removing us from the world and its evil influence. However, we must choose to get the world and its evil influence out of us. This is our part, and the Lord God won’t do our part for us.

We must choose to grow from being identical or like the world, to be identical to or like Jesus. The Word of God is clear that this is God’s Will, that all of His children be just like the Firstborn Son. AMPC Romans 8:29; For those whom He fore-knew (of whom He was aware and Loved beforehand), He also destined from the beginning (foreordaining them) to be molded into the image of His Son (and share inwardly His Likeness), that He might become like the Firstborn among many brethren. This is why we have to begin to find out who we are in Christ. Since we are supposed to be like Jesus, we have to get to know Jesus.

Jesus invites us to learn of Him so we can be like Him. AMPC Matthew 11:29; Take My Yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I Am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart. We were given a Teacher and Helper to help us become like Jesus. AMPC John 14:26; But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name (in My Place, to represent Me and act on My Behalf), He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.

John Maxwell gives us some helpful steps we can take to help us in our personal growth.

1. *Guard your self-talk. Whether you know or not, you have a running conversation with yourself all the time. Do you encourage yourself or do you criticize yourself? Negative self-talk comes from the evil influence of the world. Now, that we are born again and are supposed to be renewing or changing our minds for the better, we must take the Word of God and begin to meditate on the good news! We must speak and declare the good news about us and renounce the negative evil influence of the world and what it says about us.*
2. *Stop comparing yourself to others. What happens when you compare yourself to others? Usually it’s one of two things; either you perceive the other person to be far ahead of you and you feel discouraged, or you perceive yourself to be better than the other person, and you become proud. Neither one of these scenarios will help you grow. It will only keep you distracted from your own personal growth. The Word of God warns us about comparing ourselves to others. AMPC Galatians 6:4; But let every person carefully scrutinize and examine and test his own conduct and his own work (your personal growth plan). He can then have the personal satisfaction and joy of doing something commendable (in itself alone) without (resorting to) boastful comparison with his neighbor.*
3. *Move beyond your limiting beliefs. Johnnetta was a good example of moving beyond her limiting beliefs. As soon as she renewed or changed her mind, she was able to change her life. This is exactly what the Word of God said would happen once we changed our minds. AMPC Romans 12:2; so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and Perfect Will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect (in His sight for you).*
4. *Add value to others. This means to walk in the Love of God. When you are walking in Love with other people you are adding value to them. Because God so Loved and valued this world, He gave His Only Begotten Son. As His representatives to this world, we express and extend His Love to other people. It will cause a cycle of Love. As we Love and value them, most people will reciprocate that sentiment. This is how we continually become more and more like Jesus.*
5. *Do the right thing, even if it’s the hard thing. Every time we take action that builds our character, we become stronger as a person. The harder the task, the greater the character builder. This is walking by faith working through Love. As we continue to follow the instructions laid out in the Word of God, we become more and more established in the Kingdom of God.*
6. *Practice a small discipline daily in a specific area of your life. If there is an area in your life that seems overwhelming to your health, work, family, or something else, try chipping away at it a little bit every day instead of trying to tackle it all at once. Self-worth is based upon the positive habits, actions, and decisions YOU practice every day. Instead of worrying or fretting about things in your life that seem to be overwhelming, do something specific about it. Begin taking small steps that will take YOU in a positive direction.*
7. *Celebrate small victories. Celebrating encourages us. It inspires us to keep going. As we accomplish our short-term goals, we should celebrate that we are making progress. We don’t have to wait until we arrive at our final destination, we can celebrate the small victories on the way!*
8. *Embrace a positive vision for your life based on what you value. If we have a positive vision for our life and we take action to fulfill that vision, then we will more readily recognize that our life matters. As the body of Christ, we should value what He values as our Head. Every member of the body of Christ is important and valuable we all need each other. AMPC Ephesians 4:10-15; He who descended is the (very) same as He Who also has ascended high above all the heavens, that He (His Presence) might fill all things (the whole universe, from the lowest to the highest), and His gifts are (varied; He Himself appointed and gave men to us) some to be apostles (special messengers), some prophets (inspired preachers and expounders), some evangelists (preachers of the Gospel, traveling missionaries), some pastors (shepherds of His flock) and teachers. His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), (that they should do) the work of ministering toward building up Christ’s body (the church). (That it might develop) until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the (full and accurate) knowledge of the Son of God, that (we might arrive) at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ’s own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him. So then, we may no longer be children, tossed (like ships) to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, (the prey of) the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, (gamblers engaged) in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead. Rather, let our lives lovingly express Truth (in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly). Enfolded in Love, let us grow up in every way and all things into Him Who is the Head, (even) Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).*