

Freedom--- body, soul, and mind

Recently a friend came over for a visit. As we sat in the living room, she commented on the neatness of my home. I smiled to myself because I knew that while my home looked neat, a careful inspection would reveal a different story! About an hour into our visit, I remembered that I had something to show my friend. The item was in my closet. As we walked to my bedroom, I cringed. I knew my closet was a mess and that my friend was about to see the real state of my home. As we stepped into the closet, I confessed that my home really was not neat after all.

Later that day I thought about what took place during my friend's visit. At first glance, my home appeared to be together. Everything had a place and everything was in its place. It was not until my friend saw the less visible areas that she learned how messy my home could be.

As I thought about this fact, I realized that many women face the same struggle when it comes to their health. On the outside, they appear to have it all together. However, deep inside an inner battle rages leaving them feeling embarrassed, ashamed, and like a failure. For every woman who has faced an inner health battle, she understands the fight to maintain the battle and conceal her secret.

Inner health battles come in different forms and exist for different reasons. Some women feel empty so they overeat or out of control so they cut. Other women feel nervous so they smoke. Anxiety can lead women to excessive drinking or a dangerous cycle of binging and purging. Perhaps all women can relate to the tendency of daydreaming in order to escape reality. Each of these struggles, along with others, represents possible health dilemmas. Unfortunately, the list also represents areas that remain "hush hush."

Thankfully, the Bible does not remain silent on these health issues. No. The Bible provides help and hope for women facing inner personal health struggles. 1 Samuel 22:5 states, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah." This verse was spoken to David as he fled from King Saul. At the time, King Saul was trying to take David's life. Naturally, David felt threatened and vulnerable. In response to his feelings, David ran to place of perceived safety. The problem? David went to a place he was not supposed to go.

Today, you and I can easily fall into the same trap when we feel threatened or vulnerable. We follow the pattern displayed in David's life as we run to hidden places and engage in hidden actions in order to feel safe and in control. These are places to which God never intended us to run and actions God never intended us to display. When this occurs, we have a choice to make. We can call these actions dangerous and wrong; or we can protect the actions by hiding them and justifying them in our hearts and minds.

As we seek to live our lives according to God's Word, we must understand that the Bible provides a clear standard and teaches the difference between right and wrong. Just like

David fled to a harmful place, he had to listen to the instruction of the Lord and go back to the land God had for him--- a land known as Judah.

Believe it or not, the Bible teaches that God has created a land for you. A land that is not physical but rather spiritual. A land free from addiction, shame, guilt, doubt, and fear. How can this land be accessed?

- Recognize the areas in your life where you have turned to harmful actions in order to gain feelings of security and control.
- Cry out to God for help. Pray passages of scripture daily in your life. One passage of scripture I often use is Psalm 142:7, “Set me free from my prison so that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.”
- Seek help from the proper places. God created you with a need for other people and that need magnifies when you deal with an inner health battle. Find a Christian agency, support group, or local church that will help you on your road to recovery.
- Know that you are not alone. God sees you and knows the struggle taking place in your life. Not only does God see you and know you, He loves you and has a plan for your life.

As a friend, I challenge you to embrace freedom--- body, soul, and mind. As you do, know I will be here cheering you on.