

Codependent Christians

Written by admin

Tuesday, 01 May 2012 07:09 - Last Updated Tuesday, 01 May 2012 08:17



Clown fish- a mutual symbiotic relationship with poisonous sea anemones

by Toni Babcock

Do you find yourself chained to the fear or the favor of man? Do you take on other people's problems and make them your own? Have you accepted Christ as your righteousness, but still feel inadequate in the eyes of others? Is it easier to play the martyr than be forthright when the stakes are high? These questions might be painful to confront, but if it sounds strangely familiar, consider the fact that you may be living as a "codependent Christian".

The meaning of the term "codependent" has expanded over the years to include anyone who displays certain destructive behaviors that affect their interpersonal relationships. These are people who typically use flawed coping strategies learned in childhood and carry those strategies into their adult life. Christians are not immune from the bondage of codependent behaviors. They have been a problem among believers since the early church.

"Codependent" describes the behavior of the church at Corinth. Aside from their sin and immorality issues, the Corinthians had a more covert spiritual problem that threatened to keep them in bondage. It was a systemic immaturity that stunted their growth in Christ, and made

them focus on outward appearances. An immaturity that tolerated others who capitalized on their desperate need for approval until it became abusive. The Apostle Paul addresses this problem in II Corinthians chapters 10 and 11. At one point he reproves, "For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face," (II Corinthians 11:20 E.S.V). Codependent Christians need light and spiritual power from Christ to replace the desperate need to gain approval that dominates their lives.

Consider these strategies in overcoming a "spirit of codependence":

1. Recognize the importance of connecting with people without developing attachments. Jesus taught and modeled this principle beautifully. He connected with people wherever he went, but he didn't need the approval of men to believe in who he was. In John 2:23-25 (K.J.V) we see an example of this in action: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." Notice how in a healthy way, Jesus connected with people on a personal level, but he did not become "attached".

In another place, Jesus healed a demoniac, but afterwards prevented the man from physically following him and the disciples. "And He did not permit him but said to him, 'Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you,'" (Mark 5:19 ESV). Jesus was not being insensitive or elitist by his refusal. He realized the man was predisposed to developing unhealthy attachments and he wanted him to walk by faith, not by sight.

2. Recognize the importance of personal boundaries. A codependent finds it difficult to set personal boundaries for themselves, or to recognize when someone else's boundary has been violated. Because of this, codependents are easy to control, or may step over someone else's boundary in a desperate attempt to "fix" things when something goes terribly wrong. Once you "let go" of the people whose approval you are trying to win, it will become clear where the boundaries belong.

3. Recognize any repressed anger you may be stuffing inside. You may feel duped and sabotaged by your own distorted perceptions. You may feel taken advantage of because of the invisible "target" you have painted on your back. You may feel angry because people you feel are disrespecting you just don't "get it". But what's to get? Unless they have unusual powers of perception, most people are not going to be able to read your mind or figure out what's bothering you.

4. Learn how to brush off negative criticism. Healthy Christians can deal with areas of sin God has pointed out in their lives and still believe that God is for them and not against them. Believing God is for you means you are willing to confess what God says about you, even though your perceptions may have been distorted in the past. Remember, you are on a journey of self discovery, and God will reveal new truths along the way. Don't let unfair criticism beat you down or keep you from voicing a valid concern. Staying in a co-dependent rut might be what some other person has in mind for you. Christ has given you the power to

Codependent Christians

Written by admin

Tuesday, 01 May 2012 07:09 - Last Updated Tuesday, 01 May 2012 08:17

break free. You will know if someone is sincere and trying to help you with their correction, or has an agenda and is trying to put you down. Unhealthy criticism is very transparent.

Once you begin to understand, and own the truth of how you got the way you are and why, constructive change can begin, and you can make progress in overcoming destructive behaviors through the power of Christ within you. You will begin to make progress in relating to other people in a more rational and mature way. You will learn how to share your spiritual battles with God and have the pleasure of sparing others all the gory details. You will learn where to position your personal boundaries and how to keep them there. Most of all, you will learn to draw your self-worth from the Savior who loves you and gave himself for you. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," (John 8:36 KJV).

Toni Babcock is a freelance Christian writer from South St. Paul. She enjoys writing short stories for children and young people, as well as memoirs, poetry and spiritual essays.

Article Source: <http://www.faithwriters.com> - [CHRISTIAN WRITERS](#)