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32: THE POWER OF OUR STORY

Whether we realize it or not, we are constantly receiving words, talking to ourselves, accepting thoughts, making conclusions and living with a narrative in our head which determines who we are and how we feel. **WE ARE OUR STORY!** What we believe affects our behaviour and our feelings. Positive words have positive power and negative words have negative power. As William Backus and Marie Chapin say in their book, *“Telling Yourself the Truth,”*—“Your attitudes, choices and beliefs make you what you are.” p.125

We have the ability to choose which words we are going to live with. Backus and Chapin explain that we can choose to live with “misbeliefs and lies” or we can choose to live with “truth”. They explain that it is the misbeliefs and lies that lead us into depression, anxiety, fear and other mental and emotional problems. I have also found this to be true as I work with my clients. The Bible is accurate when it says in **John 8:32:** *“The truth will set you free.”*

When clients arrive for counseling, their presenting stories are normally filled with negativity, pain, problems and unhappiness. After listening to the story and really understanding what the person is experiencing, we reach a point where I encourage the person to get creative and give the old, repetitive story a title. I say, “If that is the story that you have been living with for all these years, consider it to be a book and now give that book a title.” The following examples show how some people have described their “Old Story”:

“ A Captive, With No Way Out”

“ Unwanted and Not Worth Anything”

“ Looping In The Darkness”

“ Lost In Depression”

As these people accept the words and sentences of the Old Story, you can see how it leads them into negative feelings. In most cases, these destructive narratives have been developed over a long period of time. The individual has repeated the words over and over until he or she has accepted and believed the words as accurate.

Backus and Chapin suggest on page 15 : “Three steps to becoming the happy person you were meant to be are:

- 1. Locate your misbeliefs – figure out the lies & misbeliefs you have accepted**
- 2. Argue against them as a way of removing them**
- 3. Replace misbeliefs and lies with the “truth.”**

The lies and misbeliefs are either located in your past memories or your current thinking. As you



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take your thoughts captive to Jesus Christ, you start to hear the truth in your mind that will set you free.

As my client starts to hear truth, one of the exercises is to start developing the New Story that s/he and Christ are creating together. I ask my client to put on a thinking cap and tell me what the title is for this new book. Some examples of titles include:

“ Walking in the Light With Jesus”

“ Free to Be Me”

“ Moving Forward in Jesus’ Truth”

“ Equipped, Prepared and Ready to Step Out”

Can you already sense the different feeling in these new titles?

Now that the person is consciously aware of the Old and New Stories, a very powerful thing occurs. As a person becomes aware of the current thinking in the mind, he/she is able to ask the really important question: **“Does this thinking lead me back into my Old Story or forward into my New Story?”** The person has a choice! Instead of automatically falling back into the well-worn Old Story, the person now can make a conscious choice between the two stories. Often my client will say, “I don’t want to go back to that Old Story. I reject it! So Jesus, I invite you into my thinking and I ask for your truth. How does your truth help me grow my new story.” As the truth is received and accepted, the New Story starts to gain in strength. The New Story then needs to be expressed. It needs an audience. You need to take your New Story and tell it to trusted and friendly people who will listen and encourage you. As it grows stronger, the New Story becomes what will dictate your behaviour and your feelings.

Exercise

I encourage you to try this process. Give your Old Story a title and then, you and Jesus develop the title of your New Story that is based in your True Self In Christ. When thoughts surface, test which way the words are leading you. Reject the Old Story and allow your New Story to grow and develop. May Jesus help you as you invite Him to reveal His truth to you about yourself.
