

February 10th 2019

## Overcoming Performance Orientation

Luke 15:11–32

**Performance Orientation is ‘the tendency to need to prove your worth to yourself and to others through performing well.’** Most of us struggle with it until we begin to see it more clearly and it can be a real slave driver. Performance Orientation can spill over into our relationship with God, where we can feel convinced that we are only loved when we are good. Leads to striving, anxiety, discouragement burnout and sometimes to giving up altogether. Scripture tells us that we are loved by God before we love or perform for him. His unconditional love and acceptance forms the foundation of our lives in Him and freedom comes as we learn to believe it!

**Luke 15 is the parable of performance orientation!** Jesus tells the story of the rebellious younger son who returned home filled with shame, assuming his behaviour negated his right to be called ‘son’ and the older brother agrees. Both sons reflect a view that many of us hold unconsciously that our standing with God and our personal value comes from how successful, hard working or holy we are. The father in the story demonstrates unconditional love and acceptance which shocks one son and offends the other!

Luke 15: 11-32

V11-18 Partying to the pigsty! What conclusions does the younger son come to about the father and his standing with him? We all want to be accepted (by others and God) what do we believe it takes to be acceptable?

**v 20** What do you see in the father’s reaction to the son’s homecoming? What is your experience of your own parents attitudes and how have these influenced your view of yourself? Do you need to forgive them?

**v 25-29** What do you see in the older son’s reaction? Can you relate to his anger and frustration? Are we free enough to celebrate God’s generosity to others and celebrate their successes?

**v 31** the story of the prodigal son is a story of being rescued from death and finding life, and ‘all is grace’ ( Brennan Manning). Neither outright rebellion nor hidden resentful performance sways the Father’s love, can you believe this? ***Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 4: 16; Rom 5:8***

### Ditching the False Friend ‘Performance Orientation’

Overcoming in this area involves us seeing performance orientation for what it is, an attempt to earn love and acceptance from people and from God. It is conquered by choosing to accept God’s love and grace at face value. Forgiving those that have taught us other values and persisting in choosing God’s truth about our value over the drive of performance. It means that when we fail we come to God for his grace forgiveness and affirmation of our identity in Him

*“Do you believe that the God of Jesus loves you beyond worthiness and unworthiness, beyond fidelity and infidelity—that he loves you in the morning sun and in the evening rain, that he loves you when your intellect denies it, your emotions refuse it, your whole being rejects it. Do you believe that God loves without condition or reservation and loves you this moment as you are and not as you should be.”* **Brennan Manning**