

"OUR DEFAULT MECHANISMS . . . IT'S JUST THE WAY I AM . . . OR NOT!"

When working with individuals and couples, we often find ourselves referring to his or her "default mechanism(s)." What do we mean by that? In the computer or electronic world the word "default" refers to "a course of action that will automatically occur by the operating program or device unless the operator specifies an overriding value or action." In other words, it is a response or action that occurs as a result of previously set (preset) parameters. When I (Jerry) am working with my computer or a particular program, I often like to change some of these default settings to match my own needs and desires. However, there are times when making these changes that I end up causing major problems in the way things work and I have to reset things to the original, default settings. Sometimes acting on a little knowledge can be dangerous!

MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE

But what does this have to do with default mechanisms in us? We believe and Scripture confirms that at the core of each one of us is an identity that is established by God. In other words, it is our "default identity" of being "made in God's image." We were made to receive the Father's love, love ourselves, and give that love away. Unfortunately, the entrance of sin into the world and its effects on us and our responses to it interfere with that "core identity." God's "default settings" in us—our made in His image identity—still exists, but something else has overridden these settings. And just as when I (Jerry) sometimes override these settings on my computer, major problems occur. But the problems now involve impaired relationships—both with one another and with God.

MANIFESTIONS OF UNGODLY DEFAULT MECHANISMS . . . A PERSONAL EXAMPLE

When people come to us for help due to various problems that have arisen in their personal lives and in their relationships, we seek to find, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the underlying "roots" or causes of these problems. By identifying those causes, we can then invite the Father to come and bring His healing presence into those wounded areas. Often, however, we also need to help the individual see how he or she has been operating from ungodly default mechanisms that have developed in response to the areas of wounding. For example, as a result of some times in my childhood where I didn't receive enough of the different expressions of love (areas of omission), as well as other times when I received things that "opposed love" (acts of commission), I (Jerry) developed some dysfunctional styles of relating to God and to others. I had a great deal of fear and shame/unworthiness inside, so I learned to shut off my emotions, avoid conflict, please others, and protect myself from feeling emotionally rejected or abandoned. These were some of my "default mechanisms" that caused me a great deal of problems in my relationships—especially early on in our marriage. It was only after allowing the Father access to these wounds many years ago that I was able to "see" what had occurred and how I had responded. I, in turn, grieved, forgave and allowed Him to bring healing to those deep places and begin to bring restoration to my heart and emotions and to reset me to HIS original design.

IT'S JUST THE WAY I AM!

There are many different types of “default mechanisms” that we can develop in response to our wounds. For some, it might be the use of anger and strength, while for others it might be more overt fear, isolation and withdrawal. (For additional help in identifying these mechanisms, we refer you to our prior articles, “You Can Trust Him” and “Exposing the Power of Shame and Taking Back the Ground” on our web site.) In some situations, an individual will state (often with anger or irritation), “It’s just the way I am!” It might be the way he or she HAS been over the course of his or her life, but it isn’t what the Father designed from the beginning and it isn’t the way He desires it to remain! It is a dysfunctional “default mechanism,” and if we are willing to acknowledge this to the Father and to those who have been hurt in the process, it is the first step in inviting the Father to bring about healing and transformation.

RESETTING US TO OUR ORIGINAL DESIGN

It would be really great if we could just have God do what one does when a computer needs to be reset to its original, default values . . . select that option and “reboot.” Unfortunately (actually fortunately), we’re not computers and it’s a bit more complicated. The process of restoring us is costly. It cost Jesus His life on the cross—He died to do away with our default mechanisms and restore us to Him—and it will cost us in terms of embracing our own brokenness and our pain and yielding our lives to Him. It involves the process of acknowledging our woundedness and its sources as well as our responses to those wounds. It involves a courageous walk on the path of the Father’s healing and restoration, done only by realizing our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9) and our inability to find true healing apart from His grace and His mercy. He CAN and He DOES respond to our cry to change our own “default mechanisms” and work with us in the transformation process moving in the direction of His original design for us.

PRAYER

Please pray with us . . . Father, I want to live and not just exist. I don’t want any default mechanisms that I have developed along the way—mechanisms that oppose love—to be present in my life any more. Please show me any of these that are operating in my life so that I can offer them to You and invite You to begin (or continue) the process of healing and restoration. I want to live from the original design that You had for me from the beginning of time. I want to live out of the fullness of the destiny and calling that You placed within me. I can’t do any of this on my own, so I give You permission to come in and do this work in and through me . . . by Your grace. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel