

How does growing become freeing to my soul?

I grew up in a church that had a lot of rules and I had a dad who was very strict. I never felt I did anything that was good enough for him nor did I have his approval. I think it's very natural to seek approval from others when you don't get it at home. So most of my life I've tried to prove that I had value and worth to myself and others, I did a lot of things to feel good about who I was. But in my heart I've been a very sad, depressed person. Very few things in life brought me joy. I set goals and strive to accomplish them, sometimes literally running from one job to the next to try to get everything done. I'm a very driven person. During these many years, I felt worthless, never good enough and always a failure. I spent a lot of time thinking these thoughts not realizing that I was focused on myself when a person doesn't feel loved by their earthly father, you don't think your heavenly Father loves you either. I thought my heavenly Father was strict, uncaring and waiting for me to mess up, so I could be punished. It's taken me awhile to realize God is not like that at all. He loves me. Nothing I can do will change that. And through this process I am learning to focus on all the love and mercy God has shown me through His Son Jesus Christ. The more I appreciate God's word and God's love, the more I grow spiritually. My value doesn't come from something I accomplish, but I have value and worth because Jesus died for me. He gave me worth. Left to myself, I'm selfish, want my own desires, I'm demanding, have prideful thoughts and a sinner. I get angry, frustrated when things don't go my way. I feel sorry for myself. I feel I am mistreated by certain people. I'm blind to my own sin, but sins of others around me are magnified and exaggerated.

I have recently learned that I need to repent of the many desires I have daily by having a lower opinion of myself. I see things I didn't see before and become more aware of my sinfulness. This keeps me realizing how much I need God and a Savior. I see what a wretched state I'm in. I desperately need mercy and have no other place to go but God and Christ. When I do this I feel peace and joy in my heart. I feel a burden lifted. I don't have to perform or try to seek approval, because I can never be good enough on my own. It's such a relief to not have to pretend I'm something or keep up appearances.

When a person starts to realize how much the Lord and Christ have done for you, it makes you appreciate and love them back. When you don't think you have much to be forgiven for you don't love much, but when you realize you are forgiven much you love much. When I focus on how much I need Christ. I'm not focused on myself.