

Your Behavior is Not Acceptable but YOU I Love

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I know people who say, “that person is no-good because of...” this or that behavior. However, behavior is different and separate from the person. Think of a four-year-old who begins to tell lies. Is the four-year-old doomed to be labeled as a liar for the rest of his life? No. For certain there is behavior that needs correction in the case of the four-year-old. It is in this way that behavior is different from the person.

This understanding is called, separating the deed from the doer. Separating the deed from the doer is necessary in all successful relationships. Learning to love the people God has given us to love requires that we often continue loving the person while understanding that their deeds are different from their being. Deeds that get ‘under our skin’ may irritate, yet we are called to love them as we love ourselves in spite of behaviors that irritate. How we communicate around these issues of difference is that task of learning to love.

In the case of a person’s seeming chronic choice and often corresponding predisposition to engage in destructive behavior, for example, behaviors meld to seem to be inseparable from the essence of the person. In this kind of matter, it is important to seek special understanding when weighing the way that person is put together.

God loves every person so very much. A person’s behavior is often not acceptable to God, but there is nothing a person can do to stop the availability of the love of God for us all. Can a person’s behavioral choices (sin) separate the individual from God’s availability in its fullness? Yes. It is the person’s choice to remove themselves from the full flowing of God’s love through choosing to sin. And yet, God still loves the person, but He cannot tolerate sin because He is perfect.

Here is the antidote for sin: turning to Jesus for forgiveness. Once this is done, the sin is gone, the sinful behavior is cleansed, and the person enters into the ever-present, overwhelming love of God. God’s love did not move; the person moved by their behavior.

We are loved; there is forgiveness readily available when we sin (we all do); and God is always at the ready to receive us with open arms when we are cleansed by the blood of the lamb – removing the sin deed from the doer.

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