**Become The Healthiest Version of You You Can Be – The World Needs You**

**By Cory Nickols**

The greatest gift you can offer the world is to become the healthiest version of you you can be. You are not an accident. You are not an afterthought. God intentionally created you. He formed you in your mother’s womb. He gave you your personality, your quirkiness, your eye color, skin tone and your talents. He made no mistake when He spoke you into existence. He even set you in the right family at this specific time in history. And He created you for a purpose. In order for us to reach our full potential and impact the world, our world, the way God wants us to, we need to mature as Christians and learn to be led by God. This is the only way we can truly become the healthiest version of ourselves we can be.

The scripture says, *“Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.” Romans 8-5-8 NLT*

Again, as Christians, it is imperative that we learn how to be guided by the Holy Spirit, hear His still small voice and discern the difference between what our sinful nature is telling us to do, which is all about self-gratification and what God is leading us to do (Galatians 5:16-17). The Bible also teaches us that the Holy Spirit is our Counselor and will reveal truth to us. He wants to help us navigate difficulties, trials and challenges so that we can ultimately mature and become the incredible, life-giving people we were created to be. Here is the challenge. If we let our sinful nature dominate our thinking and actions, it brings death into our lives – death to relationships with family members, coworkers, friends and anyone else that comes across our path. And, it brings death to the dreams God has placed in our hearts.

I’ve experienced the damaging effects of living by my fleshly, sinful nature in my own life. One time in particular comes to mind. It had to do with my relationship with my younger brother when I was in high school. I didn’t like him hanging out with me or my friends. He was outgoing, funny and loud. He was the life of the party and I was jealous of him. Because of the insecurities in me and my selfish desire to not want him to steal my thunder, so to speak, I didn’t want him spending time with me or my friends. My mind was filled with carnal thinking that was destructive to my relationship with him. And it caused a real wedge in our friendship. In addition to this, there was another situation that involved him that continued to add fuel to the fire. In our family, there was an unwritten rule growing up that when my siblings and I rode in the car with one of my parents, the oldest sibling had the privilege of sitting in the front passenger seat. I had to allow my older brother to sit in the front seat and I expected my younger brother to show the same level of respect toward me when it was my turn. Yet, this was not the case. My younger brother would run quickly to the car and sit in the front seat. And worst of all, my parents let him do it! Thoughts of anger and frustration consumed me and I despised my brother all the more. Then one day, God spoke to me deep down on the inside, “Cory, I want you to show your brother unconditional love and value him as your brother and as a person made in My image. Give him preferential treatment. Extend him grace because I’ve extended it to you! Offer him the ‘front seat’ every time you get in the car with him.” I knew that I knew that I knew this was the right thing to do even though it stretched me to the max. So…with God’s help and grace, I invited my younger brother to start hanging out with me and my friends. I looked for ways to serve him and make him feel important, including giving him the front seat in the car! He stood amazed at the transformation in my heart toward him. He saw that I had actually changed, and because of the unconditional love and acceptance I showed him, he changed. He began respecting me simply because I showed him love and appreciation and valued him as a person. I stood amazed at what God did. When I finally let go of doing things my way and started letting God direct my thinking and actions, miracles began taking place and the broken, damaged relationships in my life healed.

Many times in our relationships, we demand other people to conform to our wishes, but God is asking us to serve the people in our lives instead. It’s a better way; it’s God’s way. Jesus came to serve, not be served. He said, “The greatest among you will be your servant” (Matthew 23:11 NLT). When God is at the center of our lives, He goes to work healing us of wrong mindsets and damaging ways of thinking that will keep us from experiencing the best life He has to offer. The byproduct of the Spirit-led life produces this kind of fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. And here is the amazing part, God helps us become the healthiest version of ourselves we can be - cities on a hill…bright lights of hope for others to follow pointing the way to Christ. In the end, we will see all of our relationships, whether family, friends, dating, or marriage partners go to whole new levels. We will become the version of ourselves the world longs for and needs!

Destiny Rescue Update:

Thank you to all the amazing supporters of Destiny Rescue! Because of you, Destiny Rescue rescued 1,074 victims, mostly children, in 2018! These precious lives who are made in the image of God are now free - free to experience the incredible love of God. Brothels have been shut down, traffickers arrested and children are now receiving hope again…this is possible because of your generosity. THANK YOU!

In addition, we’ve seen more kids and families than ever experience restoration and healing through our aftercare and referral programs. And with the ability to provide better options, we are equipping and empowering more children and their families than never before.

And lastly, I have an update on a girl that we rescued. I shared her story with everyone at the Labor Day Singles Retreat this past summer. Botum, who we rescued, went through our restoration program and then eventually went through our vocational training program to learn how to sew. Her mother was given a microloan to purchase a food cart and started making almost 6 times what she used to make! Now here is the exciting update. Botum has recently become the Children’s Director at her church. God is so good. You are helping make dreams like this beautiful young woman come true for children all over the world. Eternity looks different because of you and is making a generational impact. THANK YOU!

If you want to learn more about Destiny Rescue, please visit our website at [www.destinyrescue.org](http://www.destinyrescue.org)