Decoupling from Pseudo-Identities

(The Hero-Achiever)

To decouple is to separate, disengage, or dissociate (something) from something else.

As we aim to embrace our recreated selves in Christ we all need to go through a decoupling process when it comes to identity. This involves emptying ourselves of false (pseudo) identities.

Your identity is formed by a variety of things including: 1. Your Upbringing 2. Education 3. Culture and worldview 4. Experiences (positive and negative) 5. Interpretation of events.

Your personality is typically formed in the first ten years of your life. When you understand how certain behavioural patterns were learned it becomes easier for you to unlearn them.

What are some characteristics of the hero syndrome?

- The hero believes they have to be strong all the time
- The hero's identity is formed as a result of getting worth and acceptance from performance
- The hero becomes the source of a positive image for the family
- The hero feels a deep sense of shame around failure
- The hero is often blind to his/her weaknesses as they look good on the outside, are constantly celebrated by the world around them and have exceptional strengths
- The hero often struggles to relate healthily to others from an equal power basis
- The hero can often experience a deep sense of crowded loneliness
- The hero often experiences a nervous breakdown or life crisis that causes him/her to face certain realities.
- The hero will often enable others to become dependent on them. Heroes often become co-dependent with victims. This is unfortunate as people should be pointed to Christ.
- The hero will often boast about their achievements and want all the credit for themselves. This affects relationships with those around them.
- The hero is often a workhorse. Les Parrott says, "For workhorses, happiness is a mirage that recedes the closer they get to their goal."
- The hero is hard on himself and often hard on others
- The hero will often judge people on one dimension (whichever one they have as a strength). So they will look down on people without goals and big dreams but not celebrate other qualities like gentleness and patience.
- The hero often does not settle to celebrate success, but as one project ends they are getting ready for the next one.
- The hero tends not to address their deep character flaws because they believe their own press with regards to their greatness in other areas. Bible examples of this are King Saul and Samson.

True heroes do not set out to be heroes in the first place. Their main goal is to serve, and in the process they become people we admire and adore.

There is the extreme version of the hero syndrome which is *a phenomenon affecting people who seek heroism or recognition, usually by creating a situation which they can resolve. E.g. Arson.*

The hero-achiever does not always manifest in the same way. They are not always corporate people that are greedy for money. They could be a super-mom that's seen as a role model and praised by everyone at church. Often only THEY know whether they are a hero-achiever.

What does the bible say to those with this pseudo-identity of hero-achiever?

1 Sam 16:7
But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

A lot of people that are hero-achievers actually have low self esteem, they seem confident on the outside but their self-acceptance is low and so is their sense of significance. At some point in their life they learnt that they were loved conditionally. They developed a debilitating belief system that says "To be accepted in life I need to achieve." Unfortunately they never seem to attain this goal. The more they get the more they want. This puts a lot of pressure on their spouses and children who struggle to keep up with them. These loved ones will often know in their heads that they are loved but will say that they don't feel it in their hearts. It seems like the first love of the hero-achiever is their next project. The deeper issue is that the hero-achiever struggles to truly bond and connect.

Col 1:29
To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

1 Cor 15:10
But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

God will empower you and energize you to do His will. When we pursue other things then we run on empty.

Being in God's will and having Christ's attitude is the best thing for your health.

Mark 8:36–38
36 *What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?* 37 *Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?* 38 *If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

Pursuing the world and mammon is often the alternative to following Jesus and His teachings. In this passage Jesus reminds us that this hero-achiever syndrome can lead to someone losing their soul in the process.

2 Cor 12:9–10
9 *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* 10 *That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

The hero struggles to talk about their weaknesses. Their identity is in their strengths and achievements and not in Christ. Sadly, many believers with unrenewed minds still think like this.

Phil 2:1-11
1 *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,* 2 *then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.* 3 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,* 4 *not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.* 5 *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*
6 *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;* 7 *rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.* 8 *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!* 9 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,* ***10*** *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,* ***11*** *and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

From this passage of scripture (*Kenosis* of Christ) we get a number of things:

- Selfish ambition is the seeking of followers and adherents by means of gifts (ambition, rivalry, self-seeking; a feud, faction).
- Conceit = Vainglory = *Kenodoksia* = "a state of pride which is without basis or justification – 'empty pride, cheap pride, vain pride'. Sadly, today many people glory and boast in worthless things.
- If we are to live in peace and be of the same mind we have to get rid of selfish ambition. This is true of a community, nation, church and marriage.

- Jesus modelled meekness, which is strength under control.
- By taking on the nature of a servant, Jesus redeemed servanthood and made it part of Christ-likeness. So the born-again spirit is servant-hearted just in the same way as it is a spirit of power, love and a sound mind.
- The Kingdom pattern and path to greatness is through self-emptying.

Philippians 4:11-13
I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Autarkēs is the Greek word for content and it means to be self-sufficient. It comes from two words *autos*, meaning self, and *arkeo* meaning to suffice or satisfied. Many people today continue to aimlessly pursue meaningless things and are never satisfied or happy.

Ask God for the gift of contentment.

The contented achiever is someone who performs from a place of worthiness as opposed to someone who has to perform in order to feel worthy.

1 Timothy 6:6-12
6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

If you are ambitious, let your zeal be for things that have eternal value.

Paul was a hero who had to let go the trappings of his former achievements:

Phil 3:7-8 (Berean Study Bible)
7 But whatever was gain to me I count as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ

We need to create a culture that celebrates the right things.

1 Cor 1:27 – 29 (Berean Study Bible)
… 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly and despised things of the world, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast in His presence.…

What does every hero-achiever need to know?

1. You are accepted by God because of Christ's finished work at Calvary.
2. God is not impressed with your performance because He is the one who gifted you.
3. God will never be disillusioned about you if you fail, because He was never illusioned in the first place.
4. Your relationships are more important than your achievements.
5. Only a few things in life have eternal value. So keep the main thing the main thing.
6. Facing yourself, your work and others is a key to true effectiveness in life.
7. Contented achievers do great things stemming from a sense of worthiness in God as opposed to trying to gain a sense of worth by what they do.
8. You can tap into God's strength to energize your work as opposed to relying on your own depleting resources.

9. There are many things that are celebrated by the world today that look like they are worth pursuing, BUT HEAVEN IS NOT APPLAUDING.

Luke 6:25–26

25 *Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.*
26 *Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way.*

IT AINT OVER 'TIL ITS OVER