

Self A - Self C - Self D Skills

Fifth Sermon in Series of Eight: God's Toolbox For Life Series

Text: II Kings 2:1-12

Intrapersonal Skills of:

- **Self Assessment**
- **Self Control**
- **Self Discipline**
- **And the Spirit of God**

INTRODUCTION:

Two young boys were forever getting into trouble - disrupting classes in school, teasing neighborhood children, taking what didn't belong to them. One day their mother asked the pastor over to see if he could talk some sense into them. Rather than threaten or reprimand the boys, the pastor decided on a more subtle approach that would help them work on self-correction, self-control. He would try to help the boys see that God is everywhere, aware of everything and is displeased when they acted wrongly.

But the pastor wanted the boys to come to this conclusion on their own, so he began by asking some questions. After he had the boys sit down, he said "Young men, I have a question for you: Where Is God?" The two boys just sat there, unsure how to answer. "Where is God?" the preacher repeated, a bit more firmly. "Surely you know the answer to a simple question like that!" The boys remained silent, too frightened to speak. "I'll ask you one more time," the pastor said, this time more firmly. "WHERE IS GOD?"

At that, the older boy jumped up and grabbed his brother, "C'mon let's get out of here!" he whispered, "God's missin' and they think we did it!"

Now that older brother had certainly assessed the situation - decided that things were out of his control - and had better run before the discipline came.

Today, we present the fifth in a series of eight messages on God's Toolbox for healthy living and were talking about skills that we need and can further develop to make our lives and relationships healthier. The last three messages had to do with our need for strong personal perceptions or beliefs about:

1. Our personal capabilities in facing problems and learning through challenges and experiences.
2. Our personal significance - believing that our life has meaning and purpose. Living with meaning and purpose from a belief system centered in God.
3. The last message reminded us that we need a strong belief that we have personal influence. Through our choices, we can bring change - healthy change in our lives. Further, that our choices hold us accountable.

Now to those three beliefs:

- Capabilities
- Significance
- Influence

we need to add four strong skills:

- Intra (within ourselves) - Intrapersonal Skills
- Inter (between us and others) Interpersonal Skills
- Systemic Skills
- Judgment Skills

Today, we focus on our need to improve our INTRA-personal skills. These skills help us to manage our emotions - our feelings There are three sub-skills that compose these. They give to us the abilities of Self A, C, and D:

- Self A - Assessment
- Self C - Control
- Self D - Discipline

The two young boys in our introduction were very lacking in these three vitally important skills. Their assessment skills were ineffective. They see role and goal in their world as that of disruption as played out in the classroom at school. There, they disrupted that which could enhance and improve their lives. They make a bad assessment and act in ways that are self-defeating and that effect the learning of others. (You know that even happens with some folks at church who act in ways that disrupt their own learning and that of others. They too, have made inappropriate self assessments). The two boys also lacked self-control (they teased the neighborhood kids- made fun of them). Such actions break the command of Christ, to love the neighbor as themselves. Love empowers us to have self-control. These two young boys also lacked self discipline as they took from others that which didn't belong to them.

As humorous as it is that the boys think they are about to be blamed for stealing God, it is equally sad that they do not understand that God is everywhere they are and aware of everything they do. In fact it is God's very Spirit that seeks and is well able to assist them to assess, control, and discipline themselves to that their behavior is changed. Self-assessment, self-control, and self-discipline are indeed the cooperative work between the Holy Spirit and you, between the Holy Spirit and me.

Galatians 5:22 says: “. . .the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” With God's Spirit, we increase our own skills of assessment, control, and discipline.

As we each look at our EQ - Emotional Quotient, let's clarify the meaning of these three sub-skills that compose our EQ. On the following two pages you will find information offered to help you clarify the meaning of these three and to assist you with the difference between them. You will also find three statements that each makes.

For Example:

- Self Assessment says: I feel _____ Because _____ I am _____
- Self Control says: I feel _____ I do _____ I experience _____
- Self Discipline says: I feel _____ I want _____ I wait and work _____

In each of the three skills, we need to ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Through Self Assessment we answer two key questions.

Through Self Control we understand the range of potential response behaviors available.

Through Self Discipline we set aside immediate gratification to achieve the goal we have identified through the Self Assessment and Self Control processes. SA+SC=SD Health

(See the following 2 pages and then we will apply the processes with two illustrations)

Let's apply:

Here's the situation: There is conflict in a personal relationship. SA asks: What do I most want to happen as a result of this conflict?

- () I want to be understood and to understand. How would I like to feel when this is over?
- () I wanted to feel appreciated and valued even though we may differ.

SC identifies and evaluates: Available Behaviors

- () Insist that the other person hears what I have to say.
- () Tell them this is the way I am . . . Live with it.
- () Offer to hear their thoughts with real interest and seek to be heard with interest as I share my thoughts.

SD determines: My response under self-control

I'm going to listen with understanding and as for the same.

Let's apply this learning to the passage of Scripture from II Kings 2:1-12. Read it below as it appears in The Message - in our modern words.

"Just before God took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on a walk out of Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, God has sent me on an errand to Bethel." Elisha said, "Not on your life! I'm not letting you out of my sight!" So they both went to Bethel. The guild of prophets at Bethel met Elisha and said, "Did you know that God is going to take your master away from you today?" "Yes," he said, "I know it. But keep it quiet."

Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here. God has sent me on an errand to Jericho." Elisha said, "Not on your life! I'm not letting you out of my sight!" So they both went to Jericho." The guild of prophets at Jericho came to Elisha and said, "Did you know that God is going to take your master away from you today?" "Yes," he said "I know it. But keep it quiet." Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here. God has sent me on an errand to the Jordan."

Elisha said, “Not on your life! I’m not letting you out of my sight!” And so the two of them went their way together. Meanwhile, fifty men from the guild of prophets gathered some distance away while the two of them stood at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up, and hit the water with it. The river divided and the two men walked through on dry land.

When they reached the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, “What can I do for you before I’m taken from you? Ask anything.” Elisha said, “Your life repeated in my life. I want to be a holy man just like you.”

“That’s a hard one!” said Elijah. “But if you’re watching when I’m taken from you, you’ll get what you’ve asked for. But only if you’re watching.”

And so it happened. They were walking along and talking. Suddenly a chariot and horses of fire came between them and Elijah went up in a whirlwind to heaven. Elisha saw it all and shouted, “My father, my father! You - the chariot and cavalry of Israel!” When he could no longer see anything, he grabbed his robe and ripped it to pieces. Then he picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him, returned to the shore of the Jordan, and stood there. He took Elijah’s cloak - all that was left of Elijah! - and hit the river with it, saying, “Now where is the GOD of Elijah? Where is he?” When he struck the water, the river divided and Elisha walked through. The guild of prophets from Jericho saw the whole thing from where they were standing. They said, “The spirit of Elijah lives in Elisha!” They welcomed and honored him.

Let’s apply SA/SC/SD to the Elisha experience. As Elijah comes to the end of his journey, he makes a final trip around Israel where his ministry had been practiced. Elisha, who desires to be an effective prophet like Elijah, now wants to go with Elijah and to be present when Elijah goes off to heaven. Clearly, Elisha has completed a good self assessment. He’s feeling insecure and he asks himself:

1. What did he most want to happen as a result of their relationship.
Answer: He wanted a double portion of the spirit of Elijah (Make Mine a Double)
2. How would he like to feel when Elijah departed?
Answer: Able and Capable. Confident and effective as a prophet.

Secondly, Elisha clearly had developed the skills related to self-control. He had full understanding of the available behaviors:

- a. He could stay put, hang out with the members of the prophet’s guild, after all, they seemed to know what was coming.
- b. He could go part of the way with Elijah, maybe to Gilgal or as far as Bethel, learn what he could to that point and then stay there.
- c. He could go all the way to the end with Elijah, ask for the double portion and do what was necessary to receive it.

Let’s see now, which of these fits what he wanted most as determined in his self assessment process? Yep, letter c is the only right choice. Being a true disciple, c is the only choice, going all the way. As it was with Elisha, so it is also with us as disciples of Christ’s. We must complete the process and go all the way if we want the abundantly healthy good life Christ leads us to.

Thirdly then, Elisha adds the SA desire to be an effective prophet and the SC choice to go the distance all the way to Jericho and back across the Jordan and look what happens:

SA+SC=Self Discipline Healthy. Elisha is able to put off immediate gratification (instant A1 Prophet Rating) for the experience necessary to accomplish his desire. The goal: to be a true, empowered prophet is accomplished. Note, many folks stand with the guild of prophets watching but not experiencing such a possible goal. On the other hand, Elisha has the self discipline to tell Elijah, I'm going all the way. He has the discipline to continue in the process until he accomplished the change he desired. He was focused, centered, self-disciplined, determined, and he received the results he was seeking.

You and I can develop the same strong Intrapersonal Skills, which Elisha possessed. We can face the experience of life before us with:

1. Self-Assessment, asking what we want, what results are we seeking?
2. We can identify potential actions - potential behaviors and assess the best choice among them.
3. We can chose to hold out for the results we desire and that God desires for our betterment. All this we can do with the leadership and strength of God's Holy Spirit within us. And in that spirit, we can grow stronger and healthier.

Our formula just needs one more S:

SA + SC + Spirit of God + Self-Disciplined Health

Experience is a great teacher, and Elisha learned much through his experiences with Elijah. This past week, I watched an interview that captures the essence of this teaching on Strong Intrapersonal Skills. The young lady being interviewed was a double amputee. Both her legs had been removed, yet she walked strongly and gracefully on her two artificial legs. She had been in an automobile accident where her vehicle went off the road and she lay for almost a full week with her legs pinned in the car before she was found. They surgically removed both legs. She survived with an even greater zeal for successful living.

The young lady shared a quote that she herself had written. She said:

“Experience is a very difficult teacher. . . Why?. . . Because it first gives the test and then explains the lesson.”

Have you had some of those experiences?

You say today, “I'm weak in these three intra-personal skills of self assessment, control, and discipline. I tell you - God in your life will keep bringing you experiences with tests that will later teach you the lesson of practicing assessment, control, and discipline.

The wise student, the wise disciple, learns from the experience and applies the lesson with strong actions of self-searching and reflection. Self-control, selecting the best possible behaviors for the best possible results and applies self-denial and self discipline with the power of the Holy Spirit that changes the experience, the test, and the lesson into healthy ends.

How are you doing INTA - WITHIN - Personally - Yourself?

That's the battle ground;

That's the field of play;

That's the fertile soil of your soul;

That's the place of your healing;

And the launch pad for your ever new life in Christ.

SA + SC + Spirit of God = Self-Disciplined Health

Prayer:

Only believe . . . Only believe . . . All Things Are Possible . . . Only believe

Only believe . . . Only believe . . . All Things are Possible . . . Only Believe!