

What for? We are driven by our aims

From asking for reason to asking for purpose

When we face a problem in our life we often start asking: Why? Where does this come from? Asking for reasons has its place and frequently we can find causes where we can do something against. But in many cases this question doesn't help us – either we don't find an answer at all or the answer (e.g. my parents had the same problem) isn't leading to a solution. Jesus is directing the focus on several occasions from the “Why?” to the “What for?”

Read together John 9:2-3

We act aim-driven

The “What for” question leads us to our own aims. Even if we're not aware of it – we always are driven by aims. Knowingly or unknowingly we pursue different aims which lead us to act in a certain way.

That means we're not victims of various causes in our life and dominated by fate without any chance for escape. Instead we're responsible for what we do and with God's help change is possible in every situation.

The issue is that in many cases we're not aware of the aims driving our actions – they're subconscious. Only if we start to investigate and bring them into light we can deliberately take over responsibility and also work on change when we realize that something is wrong with our objectives.

This worksheet wants to equip you with a foundational understanding of our “aim drivenness” as well as give you some tools to bring subconscious aims into consciousness and facilitate change.

Asking “What for?”

Practice: Everybody takes some time to write down a personal problem. It doesn't need to be a deep issue – a simple sentence or a general problem is sufficient as well. After verbalizing the problem everybody writes down an answer to the question “What do I want to reach in that situation?”.

Now go into groups of two. One person is asking the other about his problem and what we wants to reach in that situation. Then he starts asking “What for?” continuously and writes down the answers until the answers start repeating and you end in a circle. After that exchange roles.

For asking the “What for” question you can use different wordings:

- What for?
- What do you want to reach / attain?
- What have you gained then?
- What is your aim?
- What is your purpose with that?
- What is your (personal) benefit in that?
- What do you want to avoid with that?

The counselor can make notes in the following way:

Problem:
What to reach:
⇒
⇒
⇒
...

Note: The aim of this practice is not to solve that personal problem, but to practice asking the “what for” question.

Replacing lies in our life with God's truth

When searching for the aims of our actions we bring subconscious motives from our heart (our inner life) into the light – and often we find filthy stuff not according to God's truth.

Romans 12:2: _____

We can replace lies in our life with God's truth the following way:

- Verbalize: What exactly is in God's eyes the lie I believe inside my heart?
- Put the truth against it: What exactly is God's corresponding truth?
- Repent in prayer:
 - Name the lie a lie
 - Ask God for forgiveness for your wrong thinking and acting
 - Say that you want to change and not believe the lie anymore
 - Speak out God's corresponding truth
 - Ask God to replace the lie by His truth in all places of your thinking and all areas of your life
- During prayer God might show you more negative effects etc. of that old lie which you need to remove (ask others for forgiveness for your wrong actions; remove symbols of your old way of thinking etc.)
- Important: Continue to speak out these truth in prayer in the upcoming time – even if we understand something with our mind it often takes a while until our whole heart and being turns around and embraces God's truth in every respect.

Price and gain

In problem situations we pay a certain price – we're unhappy with it and see it as a problem. Still, more than often nothing changes in the way we act when we come into the same situation again. One reason is that we still have a certain (subjective) gain in acting the way we act.

And as long as our perceived gain is higher than the price we pay nothing will change in our actions. But this whole consideration is mostly taking place subconsciously. Asking for price and gain makes us aware of them and enables change.

Practice: Everybody writes down a personal problem and how he acts in the situation. In groups of two the other person asks:

What is your price in that situation? (What are the negative consequences of how you act?)

What is your gain in that situation?

Some notes:

- Doing nothing is also an action
- Figuring out the price is often easy but with the gain it seems harder. Our actions seem to be nonsense – why should there be any real benefit? But it's not about objective benefits, it's about a perceived (subjective) gain in the moment we act.
- We can ask more specific: “Put yourself into the situation [describe the situation]. Now you ... [repeat how the person acts]. In that very moment, what do you gain? How do you feel?”