

Being yourself is not easy. Many times being around family makes it even more challenging. It is time we talked about it! The end of each year brings multiple opportunities to be with family. It can be a hard time of year or a good time of year. With family, you should be yourself. So why is that it not the case so much of the time?

Family Where You Should Be Yourself:

I share a blog post for a Stuff I Learned Yesterday podcast I did. You can listen to the podcast

here: <http://www.goldenspiralmedia.com/stuff-i-learned-yesterday-episode-439-family-where-you-should-be-yourself>

I hope this encourages you to grow and be yourself!

Family:

I don't know about you but for me it is not always easy. Why? Well I think I can sum it up in one word, expectations. Really, it should be easy to be true to yourself around family. They love you and want the best for you.

Personally, the issue is not my family or their expectations. The issue for me has been my perceptions of their expectations and my own expectations. When there are so many expectations, it can make time with family challenging.

You see we all have expectations of what we think the holidays should look like. We want to impress others. We want to impress our family. We want to look like we have it all together. It has been challenging for me, because I felt out of place. I'm single and have no kids. So I felt guilty for not providing grandkids for my parents to enjoy. I felt lonely because the holidays are tough when you are single.

This has made holidays hard for me over the years. But things are changing for me. Why? One person is helping me to make those changes in my own heart and mind. Christ is that person. As a person of faith talking to people who may or may not have faith this may sound silly, but it is true.

You see the heart Christianity is the fact Christ came to restore relationship between the Father and us. His death and resurrection removed the barriers between the Father and us and provided adoption into His family. God's love, forgiveness and grace provides such a great example to me.

I knew all these things and had experienced them, but had not let that reality take hold in my mind and heart with regards to family. I have slowly begun to see that I was putting my expectations for myself on to my family. It was not that they had these expectations for me, but I thought they did.

I have slowly begun to be more content with who I'm becoming with Christ's help. I've also seen that my family loves me and I can be myself around them. They love me and give me grace. They help me to grow and become better. I'm also learning to do that for them as well. You see my faith has taught me how precious life is and how precious family is. I've learned that too often we worry, about expectations and what will happen. Because of that, we are not in the moment. We are not really there. When we are not really there, we miss the wonderful opportunity to just be with our family. If we are more content in ourselves, then the time we spend with family is quality time.

I know this is not the case for every person and every family. I know there are folks who are struggling and the thought of family gatherings is a cause major stress! Know that I feel for you and am praying for you. But know that there is hope. I'm seeing a change as I focus my heart and mind on making family times about family, not gifts and not expectations.

I'm not saying that expectations are bad. But we have a health balance in life. We also need to be content where we are now and give others that grace as well. We need the grace to be ourselves and family should be a place where we can receive and give that grace. We need to love our family!

"Love her, love her, love her! If she favours you, love her. If she wounds you, love her. If she tears your heart to pieces - and as it gets older and stronger, it will tear deeper - love her, love her, love her!"

— [**Charles Dickens, Great Expectations**](#)

Now I'm not saying that we need to stand for abuse or punishment. But too often we don't

really love our family members or ourselves. Love is a commitment not just a feeling. We need to give grace and love in our families and to ourselves as we grow.

What I Learned:

So what have I learned? Family is precious and we only have a very limited time with them. So let's endeavor to make it the best. Let's learn to be ourselves and enjoy the time not get in the expectation loop.

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