We all have needs – some we are aware of, but other needs remain unknown to us, even disowned. Some of these unknown (unconscious) needs were never satisfactorily met during our development, causing the need to become over -strong, or too weak, or distorted. As a result such unconscious needs may be influencing our behaviour in ways unknown to us. Our lack of conscious awareness limits our freedom to change those behaviours, and we end up acting in ways that we dislike over and over again. Our capacity to relate freely and maturely with others will be limited in these particular areas of unconscious, unsatisfactorily met need.

# Spiritual Blindness

We bring this same lack of need awareness to our relationship with God. These unconscious needs mean we are unable to give our lives freely and maturely to God in certain aspects of life, for the simple reason that we are not even aware of them – they are by nature unconscious to us. In other words we are truly ‘blinded’ by our unmet and distorted unconscious needs.

This was how Jesus rebuked the scribes who were blinded by their own personal agenda. St. Paul reflects this reality also when he says,

“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” Romans 7:15

We say these needs are ‘motivating’ us, because they push from within craving for the fulfilment and satisfaction that they never received during childhood development. they are the source of much of our inner conflict and tension; needs wanting to be gratified and yet at the same time our sense of what is right knows it is inappropriate to do so.

There is nothing left for us in our spiritual blindness but to pray that God will reveals to us through Grace, what it is in us that needs to be freed in us. Left up to ourselves we are like helpless babes unable to even see what it is in us that limits our capacity to return God’s love.

Why Don’t we Recognize

what Burns in our Hearts

# Unrealistic Expectations

# A child desires to be loved exclusively and without limit. Thus a child's desire to be loved is unrealistic as no human love is without limit.

# Yet, it is also true that the child would be very satisfied with real mature love. In fact, if mature love were given, the unrealistic demand for exclusive love would be diminished considerably. However, the capacity for tendering genuine mature love is rare indeed.

# Since children so seldom receive sufficient mature love and warmth, they continue to hunger for it throughout life unless this lack and hurt are recognised and properly dealt with. If not, they go through life unconsciously crying out for what they missed in childhood. This in turn causes in them an inability to love maturely as adults. This is passed on from generation to generation.

# The remedy cannot be sought by wishing that it was different and that people would learn to practice mature love. The remedy lies solely in you. True, if you had received this love from your parents, you would not have this unconscious problem, a problem of which you are not really and fully aware.

# But this lack need not trouble you or your life if you see it, if you become aware of it, and if you rearrange your former unconscious wishes, your regrets, your thoughts, and your concepts about love. As a consequence, you will not only become a happier person, but you will also be able to extend mature love to others, and be in a mature love relationship with God.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **COMPULSIONS** | **IDEALIZATIONS** | **AVOIDANCES** | **EGO-FIXATIONS** | **DEFENSE - MECHANISMS** |
| *Needs that demand fulfillment*  *and push my behaviour.* | *A protective self-image that helps me to experience myself as good.* | *These maintain the idealization.* | *The shell that gives protection, security.* | *Helps me avoid what*  *threatens idealizations.* |
| Need to be perfect | I am good because I am right | Anger / hatred | Resentment | Reaction formation, projection |
| Need to be needed | I am good because I am helpful | Personal needs | Flattery | Repression,  projection |
| Need to succeed | I am good because I am successful | Failure (especially in the eyes of others) | Vanity | Identification with  roles and images |
| Need to be special | I am good because I am sensitive, unique | The simple and ordinary | Melancholy | Artistic sublimation/ introjection |
| Need to know | I am good because I am wise, perceptive | Emptiness /  inner poverty | Stinginess | Isolation / compartmentalization |
| Need to protect the self | I am good because I am obedient, faithful, do what I should | Disobedience and  or deviation | Cowardice | Projection |
| Need to avoid pain | I am good because I am okay, fine | Pain | Planning | Sublimation of  painful experience |
| Need to exceed | I am good because I am powerful | Tenderness and weakness | Vengeance | Denial |
| Need to avoid (in general) | I am good because I am settled, tranquil | Inner conflict and turmoil | Indolence | Narcotization |