

IN THE MARGINS: Thoughts on Becoming Whole

By Tony Martin

Editor

What does it look like to be whole?

I want to be *whole*. I've been on this kick of moving from brokenness to wholeness.

I've figured this out – not because I'm all that brilliant, but just because it's self-evident. The thought is to be complete in Christ. That's what it means to be whole. Without Him, there are simply missing pieces.

The implications are huge. It means that you thrive spiritually. It means that you live strong. It means that you are whole and complete.

So what does that look like? Let me share some good stuff from scripture.

7 thoughts.

1 – It means that you aren't looking for wholeness in places apart from God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 reads, *"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."*

It means that no one but God Himself can return you to wholeness. This is about grace, and the yearning of your heart. There are quick fixes out there, but they don't last because they're based on something that has no foundation.

Psalm 73:26 reads, *"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."*

2 – You can't realistically expect other people to meet the needs only Jesus Christ can.

John 15:11 reads, *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

Relying on God is the only way you can be healed and fulfilled. This is a companion thought to #1. This one, though, has more to do with what you think people can do to make you whole.

I had a student tell me once, when referring to her boyfriend, *"He completes me."* I get that; we need others, and we especially need others in relationships that help us with our shortcomings. Still, we're still talking about completeness in the flesh here. Aim for eternal completion. Jesus does that.

Psalms 107:20 reads, *"He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave."*

3 – You realize your worth is not defined by your appearance, job performance, human relationships, or anything apart from your relationship with God as His child.

2 Corinthians 5:7 reads, *"We live by faith, not by sight."*

This is tricky. We don't think we're whole because we aren't measuring up to some standard out there. Truth is, though, that the relationship with God I've been speaking of is the only flawless source of your sense of worth. It's not how you "look," or how you think you're perceived. How does God see you? He is what makes you whole, not some self- or society-imposed standard.

4 – Don't say "It's impossible." God gives freedom. You are forgiven and loved no matter what. You show God gratitude by living in His light and making wise choices.

1 Peter 5:7 reads, *"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."*

You aren't stuck. You are not broken forever. You can be whole. This casting anxiety thing? It's a promise, because He does indeed care for you.

5 – You don't live your life to please other people. Instead, you strive to please God by discovering your purpose in Him and living that to the max.

Psalm 94:19 reads, *"When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul."*

Can I just 'fess up here and tell you that I want people to like me? I mean, the alternative is for people to dislike me, and that's not especially appealing. You can't please everyone, right? So, the obvious tactic is to please God. He's got you here for a reason. He isn't hiding that from you. Find and embrace that reason. Be joyful.

6 – Stop yourself immediately when an unhealthy thought enters your mind, and challenge it with "Does this thought line up with the word of God?"

Psalm 42:5 reads, *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my savior and my God."*

What takes up headspace in your life? Here's an absolute, incontrovertible truth: *you become what you think about*. Man, I could riff on that all day. I don't need to because you know exactly what I'm saying. It's true.

7 – The battlefield is your mind, first and foremost.

2 Corinthians 10:5 reads, *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

Again, I'm piggybacking on a previous thought. But your *mind*, y'all! That's where it goes down.

Here's the cool thing. You have this superpower that distinguishes you and separates you from all the rest of creation:

You can choose. You can make choices. You can even make *good* choices.

That's a big deal. By God's grace and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, you can choose the quality of your life. You can't control the outcome of things – God does that – but in aligning yourself with Him and acting in obedience, things work out. Every time. Maybe not in the way you wanted or planned, but in a way that honors God and leads to your ultimate success.

I think that's amazing. That's being made whole.

Thoughts that lead to brokenness are the devil's way of blocking what God wants you to know about who you are in Christ. You have to take those thoughts about yourself and lock them up. Make your mind listen to what God has to say about you. If you do, you will find wholeness.