**Self-Esteem**

**(Not Enough of the Right Kind)**

Self-esteem is just what it sounds like; the amount of regard one has for self. When it comes to self-respect, there are folks at both extremes and lots in between. Jesus recognized this when He said, “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.” Some people are *way* too impressed with themselves, and the scriptures have a lot to say about them (more on them in a later article). Others possess an almost paralyzing lack of confidence, a self-esteem that is so low that their manner of life is consistent with their low expectations. To make matters worse, those who don’t respect themselves tend not to respect anyone, and their unhealthy relationships simply contribute to the downward spiral of their lives. But the situation is not hopeless.

As with any internal struggle, only a person who recognizes they have a problem and who wants a better life can change. God has the answers for anyone willing to come to Him and let Him call the shots. I believe the scriptures teach four principles that are valuable for all of us, and particularly the person with a self-esteem problem.

**Recognize that God values you highly.** If you, in your heart of hearts, feel that your self-worth is pitifully low, you need to recognize that the God who created you doesn’t agree. Jesus taught that, even though sparrows are of little monetary value, “not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” Don’t feel like a tiny spec on a tiny planet in a massive universe! God knows everything about you personally and He cares! You are important to Him!

**Get rid of the guilt.** Some people experience serious emotional problems because of the burden of guilt on their hearts. But simply trying to “let go” of the guilt emotionally without actually eliminating the guilt of our actions is the ultimate exercise in futility. The wages of sin is spiritual death, separation from God. This death sentence will never be commuted until the guilt of the sin is removed. God has loved you enough to send His son to accept the sentence of death on your behalf. You can allow God to obliterate your guilt in the same way he did those who killed His Son; if you are willing to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). A healthy heart begins with a clear conscience (1 Peter 3:21).

**Learn a better way**. Romans 1:16 says that the gospel, the good news of God’s Son, is God’s power to save. God can save you, not only from spiritual death, but from the shambles of a life you have made for yourself. The following verse says that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God, in other words, the way God wants you to live! He can teach you attitudes and actions that are positive instead of destructive for yourself and others. When you learn to love others, they reciprocate and their estimation of you begins to reflect your true self-worth. The happy person is one who hungers and thirsts for the righteousness only God has to offer (Matthew 5:6).

**Let Christ give you confidence**. Humility is not only a good thing, it is absolutely necessary if you want to be Jesus’ disciple. However, there is a big difference between humility and paralyzing fear. The apostle Paul offers an excellent description of a man of action who, at the same time, is in total submission to the will of Christ in Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” If you have always felt woefully inadequate, maybe that’s because you have been putting your confidence in the wrong person. You can be the kind of person God wants you to be. You can accomplish the things God wants you to accomplish. You’ll be amazed what you can do with God’s help if you are willing to turn your life over to Him.

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