

### Self Esteem: is that a Christian Concept?

**Matt 18:1-14** We see that childlike faith is necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus continues with the Father's concern for His own: the parable of the lost sheep; In Mark 9: 33-37 Scripture tells us that humility is the secret to greatness. In Mark 42-50 Jesus gives us a solemn warning of hell. Our relationship with the Father must be restored; Luke 9:46-48 parallels that of Matthew and Mark. The key is "whoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him who sent me; for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

### Do we do not need to feel good about ourselves?

We need to feel good about God's love for us in spite of our depraved and pitiful self-esteem. Jesus' command (Matt. 22:35-37) to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength; and love our neighbor as we love ourselves never tells us that we should love ourselves. It tells us that we already do. What He wants us to do is to give all of that away. Our low self-esteem helps us to be more like Christ. Got low self-esteem? Hallelujah! You must be doing something right.

### Should we invest or help others?

Now let's try to be less consumed with our consumerism and more concerned for others, who could use ministry from us! Do something sacrificial this week. Instead of doing something for yourself, do it for someone else. See if you can go 24 hours straight without using the "vertical pronoun" (I, me, my, mine, myself), and start over every time you miss. When you can finally do that then use the knowledge of your own selfishness to focus on someone else's need this season. Be self-forgetful just like Jesus.

### Is it wrong to love yourself?

Contrary to popular opinion, it is not the case that we are called to give worth to self, or to have pride in (self-esteem), it is assumed by Jesus that we already do. In fact, He often says that we have too much.

Jesus calls us to forget self, and let Him have all the glory. He calls us to love Him instead of self and others, not alongside our pride. Self is what we are preoccupied with; it is not something we need to be concerned about because God is the reason for our goodness, and we cannot increase God's self-esteem. In order to love God and others, we need to put self last and not first.

### Is pride a sin? If pride is sin, what can we do ?

In Luke 18:10-14, we have an example of pride: "Two men went up in to the temple to pray. The one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and even as this tax collector.' And then the Pharisee gives a goodness account of himself stating, 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess, and the tax collector, standing far off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breasts saying 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

Jesus says that selfish pride is the problem. Our selfishness is exactly why He came to Earth, to DIE for our pride. That is serious.

### Will position, power and prestige help our self-esteem?

Jesus had been talking about how He was to suffer and die, and that life would be hard for them in just a short time. In Matthew 17, we have an eye witness account from Peter, James, and John of the Transfiguration, which is a preview of the future kingdom. The transfiguration was a witness to the eventual glory after the pain and humiliation of Christ's death on the cross.

However, the disciples had skipped over the humiliation part and the Jesus' suffering part. They went straight to the glory..."vain" glory. They were too busy with self- esteem. They were overflowing with dreams of pride, position, power, and prestige.

### How should we measure up to others?

In Matthew 18, Jesus, frustrated with their narcissism, pulled out the big guns. He brought out a lowly little child.

Children, by nature, are not worried about prestige; they have none. Children are who they are, and are well aware of their vulnerability and need for others help. They are humble by necessity.

Grownups, on the other hand, are more concerned with how they "measure up" to others.

Their sense of self worth is not damaged, it's out of control.

### Are self-esteem issues a result of the "fall?"

Self-esteem issues are a result of the "fall." Our self-justification and preoccupation with pride are the root of it. What we need to remember, is that our assessment of our selves is defective and deceptive. It tells us we are "something," and it is prideful and useless in nature.

It has been broken, and is in need of redemption, and guess who the first person it fools is? God created us to be worshippers, not of ourselves, but of God.

### Should we be dependent?

Jesus used the example of a little child to show the humble dependence on God that is the opposite of self-autonomy. It is characteristic of Jesus and all Kingdom people. Jesus is the quintessential example of self-denial and self-effacement. Satan, on the other hand, (the epitome of evil) is the best example of self-esteem there is. He is so self-confident that he thinks God should worship him.

### Do we need to love ourselves in order to love others?

Oh, you might say, but I have to love myself in order to love others or love God. If you believe that, friend, you believe a lie. Matt. 22:35-37, presupposes that you already have all the self-esteem you need. You certainly do not need any more. It is not true that you need to love yourself; it is true that you need God's love. That is the truth. It is God's love to us precisely because we *are unlovable*. That is what moves us to love others. We love Him because He first loved us (1John 4:10, Gal 2:21). To say that we must love ourselves, denied the sin nature of man by implying that somehow we are mistaken rather than sinful. We are victims instead of perpetrators. We are not mistaken, and we are not victims. God says we are depraved (Is. 53:6; Rom 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 1John 1:8-10), and in need of His redemption. Self-esteem flies in the face of this, and is blasphemous to God because it calls God a liar. So how is your self-esteem? Do you want to lose it? I do.

### What type of attitude should we have to improve our self-esteem?

Emphasize our strengths.

Change what can be changed. Some things fast, others gradual, and others never. For the things that cannot be changed, we can change our attitude about them.

### How can we be positive?

Practice thinking positive and giving compliments. Be honest and sincere in your compliments.

### What Does Scripture Say About Self-Esteem?

Romans 12:3 -- For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

### What Does Scripture Say About Relating to Others?

1 John 4:19-21

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

### What Does Scripture Say About Our Relationship to God?

1 John 3:1

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

### What does scripture say about attitude?

James 4:6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

### What does Scripture say about our responsibility to others?

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

2 Corinthians 10:14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ.

### What Does Scripture Say About Thinking Our Way Into Heaven?

Luke 16:15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### What Does Scripture Say About Your Value to God?

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

#### **What Does Scripture Say About Our Response to God?**

**Mark 12:30-31** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.

#### **What Does Scripture Say About Following God?**

**Matthew 16:24-25** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

#### **What Does Scripture Say About Reasons to Follow God?**

**Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.