

Healing our Image of God

I. Discovering our True Worth

A. Our sense of self-worth is more than just feeling good about ourselves.

1. A biblical goal is attaining an accurate view of ourselves, God and others based on the truth of God's word.
 2. John 10:10 "THE THIEF COMES ONLY TO STEAL AND KILL AND DESTROY; I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL."
 3. Life's challenges and series of problems often act as an obstacle to search for significance. Spiritual warfare can weaken our faith, Lower our self-esteem and lead us to depression.
 4. An accurate, biblical self-concept contains both strength, humility, both sorrow over sin and joy about forgiveness, a deep sense of our need for God's grace.
- B. Our true self of self-worth comes from God's love and acceptance, Which are unchanging. He created us; he alone can fulfill our needs.
1. People and culture change their basis of acceptance.
 2. When God created us, he gave us a sense of purpose. When our first parents rebelled vs. Him, they lost focus. The quest for purpose is a search of the human race.
 3. Money, fame, success, prestige, power etc...are counterfeits of the true worth we have in Christ.

II. Luke 15

A. Have I given my life to Jesus as my Savior and Lord?

1. God has freely given us our worth.
2. Failure, disappointment approval of others doesn't deter God's approval and acceptance of me through Christ.
3. Repentance is not opposed to God's acceptance. Rather, repentance recognizes our true self-worth comes only in Christ.
4. If we believe our self-worth is truly found in Christ, then His teaching and commands are not burdensome but are intended to ground my life more fully in the deepest sense of acceptance: my worth based on the unchanging character of God and His truth.

Healing our Image of God

III. Jesus Christ is worthy of my trust, love and obedience.

A. Christ deserves our affection and obedience.

1. The more we understand His love and passion for us, His majesty and acceptance of us, the more we will praise Him and desire to please him.
2. A simple and pure devotion to Christ is our highest motivation in serving Him.

B. Enemies to simple devotion to Christ.

1. **perfectionism**: we cannot tolerate failure or weakness in ourselves.

- a. We can't meet our standards
- b. Success will bring me fulfillment and happiness if I measure up to certain standards. We become disappointed, disillusioned, exhausted when we don't meet those standards.
- c. We became a slave to perfectionism.
- d. i.e. Jane's story
- e. The process of healing and hope comes through:
 - i. Honesty
 - ii. Affirming relationships
 - iii. Holy Spirit renewing our mind in truths of Bible
 - iv. Time

2. **Approval addict**: I must have the approval of certain others to Feel good about myself.

- a. This "mind" set will exhaust us. As we exhaust ourselves to win the approval of certain people, we are left disappointed.
- b. People-pleasing behavior makes us feel unacceptable.
- c. Often guilt feelings are associated with this.
- d. Reconciliation is the solution to this.

Col.1:21-22.

"AND YOU WHO WERE ONCE ESTRANGED AND HOSTILE IN MIND, DOING EVIL DEEDS, 22 HE HAS NOW RECONCILED[A] IN HIS FLESHLY BODY[B] THROUGH DEATH, SO AS TO PRESENT YOU HOLY AND BLAMELESS AND IRREPROACHABLE BEFORE HIM."

- i. Reconciliation=to restore a relationship or friendship; to settle or resolve something.
- ii. We don't earn God's grace and friendship by our own merit.
- iii. Jesus gave back to God all the love, trust, obedience and Love that you and I should have given. The Father got more

Healing our Image of God

back from the Son's trust, love and obedience than He lost from us. In this dynamic relationship of the Son and the Father, we are given the gift of acceptance through reconciliation.

John 3:16 "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM MAY NOT PERISH BUT MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."

e. Acceptance of what Christ has done for me is key to Reconciliation. Titus 3:5. "NOT BECAUSE OF ANY RIGHTEOUS DEEDS WE HAD DONE BUT BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY, HE SAVED US THROUGH THE BATH OF REBIRTH AND RENEWAL BY THE HOLY SPIRIT"

3. **Guilt and condemnation:** Understanding the difference
- Guilt creates feelings of alienation and condemnation.
 - It can be a constant burden: "the gift that keeps on giving."
 - Guilt is a strong motivation playing on our fears of failure and rejection.

Romans 8:1 "SO NOW THE CASE IS CLOSED. THERE REMAINS NO ACCUSING VOICE OF CONDEMNATION AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE JOINED IN LIFE-UNION WITH JESUS, THE ANOINTED ONE."

- Guilt as a response to sin is natural. Sin is by its nature-destructive. Failure to live in accordance with God's character (we were created in His image and likeness) leads to guilt.
- Our response to this is to accept the forgiveness of Christ. Our sin is forgiven: "sent away." Jesus took on himself our sin and guilt, though he was without sin and guilt.
- Guilt feelings and condemnation manifest themselves as:
 - I punish myself for past failures
 - I blame others for past failures so I can relieve my conscience.
 - I defend myself by blaming others to make myself Feel better.
 - I believe I must "pay" for my sins/mistakes.

Healing our Image of God

4. **Shame:** I am what I am; I cannot change. It is hopeless.
 - a. Cynicism, pessimism, skepticism are characteristics of my attitudes
 - b. "I just can't help myself-this is the way I am-how I'll always be."
 - c. Solution: I am a new creature in Christ. In the waters of baptism-I am made into a new creature in Christ. Through the death and resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of Christ dwells in me.

Gal. 4:7 "SO THROUGH GOD YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE BUT A SON, AND IF A SON THEN AN HEIR."
 - d. What the "new creature" means?
 - i. Lay aside the "old" self-stop living in worldliness.
 - ii. Renew our minds in God's truth.
 - iii. Let the Holy Spirit "fill" me often to influence my Thoughts and actions over time.