THE SEARCH FOR SIGNIFICANCE WORKBOOK

BUILD YOUR SELF-WORTH ON GOD’S TRUTH

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Looking Ahead

A FAMILY SQUABBLE

Margie had called her mother to wish her a happy birthday. What started to be a pleasant conversation, however, suddenly turned sour. Instead of sounding happy that Margie called, she began to scold Margie for not visiting her often enough. Then when Margie related that her five-year-old son, Kevin, had a cough, Mom criticized Margie for not taking the child to the doctor sooner. She told Margie that if only she would insist that Kevin wear a sweater more often, he wouldn’t get sick.

As tension mounted between mother and daughter, Margie quickly ended the conversation and hung up, absolutely furious at her mother for this turn of events. Then Margie felt guilty about being angry at Mom. After all, it was Mom’s birthday.

Have you ever known anyone in Margie’s situation, or have you found yourself in a similar circumstance? One in which you felt as angry and discouraged as she did and blamed yourself?

All of us have times when unpleasant life circumstances come along and knock the props out from under us, and we feel a sense of failure, rejection, guilt, shame, or all those emotions combined. These unpleasant circumstances can result from an everyday conversation between family members, such as in Margie’s case. Margie received harsh criticism from another person. Any number of other situations can leave us feeling rejection, such as—

- loss of a job
- loneliness
- feeling too busy
- feeling misunderstood
- death of a spouse or other loved one
- imprisonment
- failure to achieve a goal
- physical or emotional abuse
- experiencing hurt easily
- experiencing frequent anger
- living in poverty
If you can relate to any of these situations, and if you can relate to any of the negative feelings that stem from them, then *The Search for Significance Workbook* is for you. It is designed to help you change your thinking about the circumstances you encounter. It will reveal God as the source of your self-worth.

After you complete a study of this workbook, you will be able to base your self-worth on the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and not on the world’s standards, such as the approval of others or the ability to succeed at certain tasks.

To help you accomplish this goal, *The Search for Significance Workbook* will help you learn these things:

- **Four false beliefs** about yourself that result in painful emotions affecting your self-worth (inside back cover).
- **The painful emotions**, or consequences, resulting from the four false beliefs. We allow these beliefs and their related emotions to control our behavior in life situations.
- **Truths from God's Word**, the Bible, that help you reject the false beliefs. We may not be able to change the situations we encounter, for these situations will occur in our lives day after day. What we can change is what we think or believe about those situations. When we change our focus, our emotions change as well. When our emotions change, our behavior also can change (inside back cover).
- **The Holy Spirit’s renewing of your mind** to replace those false beliefs and the harmful emotional responses that often result.
- **Memorization of God’s Word** so you can hide God’s truth in your heart and make it a part of your everyday life.
- **An affirmation**, or positive statement, based on God’s truths. You can memorize “My Identity in Christ” (p. 113) and use it to reject the false beliefs as they arise.
- **How to take a Trip In**, a process in which you get in touch with what you really feel about a situation at times when you sense that your emotions could lead to destructive behavior. By identifying the emotion you feel, you learn to reject the false belief and then replace it with God’s truth. See page 112.

On the inside back cover you will find the course map. On it you will find four false beliefs and God’s truth. The affirmation, “My Identity in Christ,” is on page 113. Turn to these pages now (p. 113, inside back cover) and start to memorize them. By the end of the seven weeks of study, they will become a part of your everyday thoughts and vocabulary.
Everyone struggles to some degree with issues of self-worth. Anyone can benefit from this study. They can use its helps in day-to-day dealings with people. People who have gone through failure or rejection can benefit from the course to help them develop a healthy identity based on Christ’s unconditional love and acceptance. Likewise, people suffering from underlying emotional pain will benefit from the material’s efforts to help them understand their pain. *The Search for Significance Workbook* offers a practical tool for dealing with issues of self-worth.

The principles behind this study represent a lifelong learning process; therefore, individuals and groups may benefit from studying the course more than one time. The first time helps the reader to use these principles in thinking and conduct. Subsequent times help participants apply these principles to their lives over and over again until they master the process.

**Study Tips.** Five days a week (which compose a unit, or week) you will be expected to study a segment of content material. You may need from 20 to 30 minutes of study time each day. Even if you find that you can study the material in less time, spread out the study over five days. This will give you more time to apply the truth to your life. Study at your own pace.

To achieve the full benefit of the educational design of *The Search for Significance Workbook*, prepare your personal assignments and participate in the group sessions. Study as if Robert S. McGee is sitting at your side helping you learn. When he asks you a question or gives you an assignment, respond immediately. Each assignment is indented and appears in **boldface type**. For example, an assignment will look like this:

**Read Psalm 139:13. Write what the verse tells about God’s care for you.**

In this activity, a line appears. You would write your answer on this line. Then, when you are asked to respond in a nonwriting manner—for example, by thinking about or praying about a matter—the type of assignment will give you a response line. Here is an example.

**Think about an individual to whom you turn when you need encouragement. Stop and thank God for this person’s role in your life.**
Activities are designed to help you learn the material more effectively. Do not deny yourself valuable learning by just glancing over the learning activities. Please do not assume that a nonwriting activity can be skipped because you do not “have to” respond.

In most cases you will get feedback about your response—for example, a suggestion about what you might have written. Personal answers are for this workbook only and do not have to be shared with the group.

Keep a Bible handy for times when the material asks you to look up Scripture. Memorizing Scripture and other elements such as the false beliefs, God’s truth, and the affirmation are important parts of your work. Set aside a portion of your study period for memory work, beginning with the verse to know for that week. Then memorize the false beliefs, God’s truths, and “My Identity in Christ.” Make notes of problems, questions, or concerns that arise as you study. You will discuss many of these during your discovery-group sessions. Write these matters in the margins of this textbook so you can find them easily.

**Sessions.** Once each week you should attend *The Search for Significance* group session to help you discuss the content you studied the previous week, practice your memory work, share insights you have gained, look for answers to problems you encounter, and apply what you’ve learned to real-life situations.

If you have started a study of this resource and you are not involved in a group study, try to enlist some friends or coworkers who will work through this course with you. This book includes leader helps on pp. 114-125.

A key decision to this study is to trust Jesus as your Savior. If you have not done so, we encourage you to make this decision. You will benefit more from this course if you have already committed your life to Christ. But if you’re not ready to make that decision just now, be aware that the need for this decision will be an ongoing emphasis. The material gives you opportunity to look at your relationship with Christ and to determine your need to commit your life to Him. How to begin a relationship with Christ is explained on page 22.
Week 1: The Search Begins

TROUBLED RELATIONSHIPS

Dave was a handsome, highly successful businessman. He had always been able to live life on his own terms. To Dave, being strong meant being in control. He had used his strength as a way of controlling his wife and children. As a result, he was emotionally distant from his family. On the surface, everything looked fine.

But now he wept like a child. Life had caught up with Dave. Gone were his wife, his children, and much of what he had worked so hard for. Reality had turned the light on in Dave’s world. He finally realized that the worst part of his world was himself. Now he longed to establish emotional closeness to his family, but he didn’t know where to start.

A key verse to memorize this week

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

–Psalm 139:23-24, NIV

Words to help you understand this week’s lessons

redemption—n. Christ’s delivering us from the curse of sin and death through His blood shed for us on the cross. He freed us from the guilt and power of sin.
(Example: Because of Christ’s redemption I am a new creature of infinite worth.)

unconditional—adj. with no strings attached; without limitation; absolute.
(Example: This week we study about God’s unconditional love.)
The purpose of this study is to help you build your self worth on a biblical basis by helping you:
  • understand your own search for significance.
  • recognize and challenge Satan’s lies.
  • apply God’s truth to day-to-day life.

Day 1
The First Step

In the introduction you were asked to read the four false beliefs that Satan seeks to firmly fix in every person’s mind (p. 112). In this week’s Scripture, we are reminded of our need to search our hearts and minds to fully know the thoughts and feelings that guide our actions.

These false beliefs shape our thinking so much that we tend to react to certain life situations based on them. Have you ever found yourself asking, “Why in the world did I do that?” or “How did I let that happen?” If so, you probably made these remarks as a reaction to an unpleasant situation based on a false belief.

On page 4 you read about an unpleasant situation for Margie, who felt anger because her mother criticized her. Now it’s your turn to write about your own experience.

Try to remember an unpleasant situation you found yourself in recently. In the margin describe the situation briefly. What did you feel?

Good news! God can transform our thought patterns from this world (the false beliefs) to His truth about us in His Word.

In the introduction you also read that what you believe about a situation creates certain emotions. We have listed those painful emotions, or consequences, for you here.

- The fear of failure
- The fear of rejection
- Guilt
- Shame

In the boxes beside these painful emotions, check any of the emotions you may have experienced recently.

Search for Significance will help you allow God to transform your thinking from the pattern of the world (the false beliefs) to His
truth about you in His Word, the Bible. We react to life situations based on a set of beliefs. We may not be able to change life situations we encounter, but we can change what we think or believe about those situations and how we act. Memorizing Bible verses is one of the ways we learn to reject false beliefs about ourselves and claim God’s truth.

“My Identity in Christ” found on page 113 focuses on God’s truth and rejects the false beliefs that often control our minds. Memorizing this statement will help you recall it when you need to remember how much God cares about you.

Turning on the Light
This false belief system distorts our understanding of who we truly are in Jesus Christ. These examples help us see a reality in many of our lives.

Carl, an ambitious father, neglects his son, who grows up to take the responsibility of running the company. Although Carl had said he was retired, he still shows up for work each day and meddles with every decision his son makes. The son assumes that his father doesn’t trust him. “He’s never trusted me. Maybe I’m just not trustworthy,” he concludes.

Peggy, a stay-at-home mother with three children, painfully wonders, Why don’t I feel fulfilled as a homemaker? She had thought children would fill that gaping hole in her life. Instead, her children were looking for affirmation from her. Sometimes it seemed she had little to give.

James, a pastor, preaches powerfully about God’s unconditional love. He feels he must succeed in his ministry, but he is withdrawn around his family. He never has understood how to apply his sermons to his life and relationships.

Check the most appropriate statement.

- 1. The truth of God’s Word is firmly implanted in the people in these stories.
- 2. One or more false beliefs about themselves control the people in these stories.

Because we aren’t aware of how wounded we actually are, we can’t take steps toward healing and health. We lack objectivity (looking at ourselves as though we were another person) to see the reality of our pain, hurt, and anger. Why do some of us lack
objectivity? Why are we afraid to “turn on the lights” and experience the truth? Human beings develop creative ways to block pain and gain significance.

In the next paragraph underline the ways we block pain.

We suppress painful emotions by driving ourselves to succeed; or we withdraw; say hurtful things to people who hurt us, and punish ourselves when we fail. Sometimes we think that “good” Christians don’t have problems or feelings like ours. We try to make clever statements so people will accept us; we help people so they will appreciate us; and we say and do countless other unfulfilling things.

A sense of need usually prompts us to look for another choice. We may have the courage to examine ourselves and desperately want to change, but we may remain unsure about how and where to start. We may not want to look honestly within ourselves for fear of what we’ll find, or fear that if we discover what’s wrong, nothing can help us. Perhaps we think our situation is normal. We may think that enduring loneliness, hurt, and anger represent a normal experience for all persons. The good news? It’s not.

Stop now and pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you look objectively at your life and to lead you to a person who can help you in the weeks ahead. When God directs you to that “someone,” write his or her name in the blank below.

Day 2

God Wants Us to Be Real

Some of us have deep emotional and spiritual scars from the neglect, abuse, and manipulation that often accompany living in a dysfunctional family (see definition). Others of us were blessed with healthier families. However, all of us suffer from the effects of our own sinful nature, not to mention the sins of others. Whether our hurts are deep or mild, we act wisely when we are honest about them. Then, we can experience growth and victory.

Many of us mistakenly believe that God doesn’t want us to be honest about our lives. We think He will be upset with us if we tell Him how we really feel (as though He doesn’t know). But God

Sometimes we think that “good” Christians don't have problems or feelings like ours.
That they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them that they may be one, just as We are one.  
—John 17:21-22

The Search for Significance tells us through the Scriptures that He does not want us to be shallow in our relationship with Him and others. Read John 17:21-22 in the margin.

Ask for God’s guidance in the following areas. Underline the ones you will find most challenging.

1. To help me be honest with myself
2. To help me think the way God thinks.
3. To help me deal with my feelings
4. To know and apply God’s truth to my life
5. To find a person with whom I can share and who will pray for me

Experiencing God’s love does not mean that all of our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors will be pleasant and pure. It means that we can be real as we feel pain and joy, love and anger, confidence and confusion.

*Self-worth*, often called self-esteem or personal significance, is a sense of self-respect and a feeling of satisfaction with who we are. True self-worth, unlike pride, is not based on our performance nor the opinions of others.

What is your opinion about yourself? Mark the following statements as T (true) or F (false).

_____ 1. I am glad I am who I am.
_____ 2. I often wish I were someone else.
_____ 3. I like my personality.
_____ 4. I have a healthy sense of self-worth.
_____ 5. I see changes which I need to make in my life.
_____ 6. I am eager to trust God for wisdom and the discipline to make these changes.

A healthy self-concept develops when we recognize our value and worth. It involves understanding that we, as unique human beings, have certain gifts and abilities unlike those anyone else has. Each of us can contribute to the world in a special way.

A person with a healthy self-concept will experience the pain of failure and defeat, but that failure won’t destroy that person. A person with a positive sense of self-esteem can enjoy personal strengths and can accept the fact that he or she has weaknesses. This represents a wholesome love for oneself.
Read Ephesians 1:3-14 in your Bible.
Check the statements that correctly describe what God already has done for you.

- 1. God has blessed you with every spiritual blessing.
- 2. God has punished you because of your failures.
- 3. God has declared you holy and blameless.
- 4. God has forgiven you.
- 5. God at times has condemned and rejected you.
- 6. God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit.

You may feel very happy and thankful; you may be overwhelmed with how much God loves you; or you may be thinking, This can’t be true. I don’t feel any of these things at all. That’s OK. It’s better to be honest and to feel pain than to deny your discomfort and to try to convince yourself that you are happy. Remember, your feelings are not the basis of truth. God’s Word is our authority. What it says is true, whether we feel it or not. The more we understand God’s Word and live by it, the more our feelings will reflect His character and love. Hopefully, in the last exercise, you did not check numbers 2 or 5.

Here are some statements that we have made thus far. Underline the ones that are true.

- We need help to see ourselves objectively.
- The Lord wants us to be honest with Him and ourselves.
- Failure will destroy a person who has a healthy self-concept.
- God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.
- God has chosen you, declared you holy and blameless, adopted you, redeemed you, and forgiven you.

God wants all people to achieve a balance between striving for excellence and being content with themselves, but relatively few of us experience that balance. From the beginning of life, we find ourselves on the prowl, searching to satisfy some inner, unexplained yearning. This yearning causes us to seek people who will love us. We strive for success as we drive our minds and bodies harder and farther. We hope that because of our sweat and sacrifice, others will appreciate us more.

What are some ways you have tried to achieve personal significance? I’ve given you one of my own as an example.

making money          ___________          ___________
The Search for Significance

The man or woman who lives only for the love of others’ attention never is satisfied—at least not for long. Our desire to be loved and accepted is the symptom of a deeper need—the need that often determines our behavior and is the primary source of our emotional pain. Often unrecognized, this desire represents our need for self-worth.

Day 3

Discovering Our True Worth

Some say the goal of self-worth is simply feeling good about ourselves. A more biblical goal goes far beyond that limited perspective. We want an accurate view of ourselves, God, and others, based on the truth of God’s Word.

John 10:10, which appears in the margin, reminds us how much God treasures His creation. It reminds us that Christ came to earth so that people might experience life “abundantly,” or fully. However, experiencing the abundant life God intends for us does not mean that our lives will be problem-free.

On the contrary, life itself is a series of problems that often act as obstacles to our search for significance. The abundant life is the experience of God’s love, forgiveness, and power in the midst of these problems. The Scriptures warn us that we experience a warfare that can weaken our faith, lower our self-esteem, and lead us into depression. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul instructed us to put on the armor of God (Godlike qualities that make us spiritually strong) so that we can be equipped for this type of spiritual battle. (See Ephesians 6:13-17.)

However, it often seems that unsuspecting believers are the last to know that this battle is occurring and that Christ in the end has won the war. They are surprised and confused by difficulties. They think the Christian life is a playground, not a battlefield.

As Christians, our fulfillment in this life depends not on how skillfully we avoid life’s problems but on how skillfully we apply God’s specific solutions to those problems.

People wrestle with the basic questions, Who am I? and, Why am I here? In the margin, write your thoughts on the answer you would give to those questions.
A correct understanding of God’s truth is the first step toward discovering our significance and worth.

An accurate, biblical self-concept contains both strength and humility, both sorrow over sin and joy about forgiveness, a deep sense of our need for God’s **grace**, and a deep sense of the reality of God’s grace.

**In the margin, read 1 John 1:9 and in your own words, make it personal. Rewrite it using I, my, and me.**

Millions of people spend a lifetime searching for love, acceptance, and success without understanding the need that causes the quest. What a waste to attempt to change behavior without truly understanding the cause of such behavior! We can learn that God gave us a hunger for self-worth and only He can satisfy it. Our value does not depend on our ability to earn people’s acceptance. People change their minds. Instead, true self worth is God’s love and acceptance, which are unchanging. He created us. He alone knows how to fulfill all of our needs.

**Listed below are examples of typical approval-seeking actions. Check the ones you can identify in your behavior:**

- I sometimes change my position on something or alter what I believe because someone shows signs that they disapprove of me.
- In order to avoid someone’s displeased reaction, I sometimes don’t say what I mean.
- I sometimes flatter people to make them like me.
- I sometimes feel depressed or anxious when someone disagrees with me.
- I sometimes apologize for myself—the excessive “I’m sorry” designed to have others forgive me and approve of me all the time.

When God created human beings, He gave them a sense of purpose. When people rebelled against God, they lost that focus. Since then people have tried to find purpose and meaning apart from God. But God has made us in such a way that He only can meet our needs. Money, fame, fine houses, sports cars, and success in a job are only counterfeits of the true worth we have in Christ. Though these promise to meet our need for fulfillment, the things they provide are short-lived. God and His purposes alone can give us a wise, lasting sense of significance.
Look below at each pair of statements. Check the one in each pair that indicates a self-worth based on God’s acceptance.

- 1. I am recognized as one of the best in my field.
- 2. I am recognized as a child of God.

- 1. My boss at work really appreciates me.
- 2. My Lord totally accepts me.

- 1. I am successful in most projects I start.
- 2. I am deeply loved by God.

- 1. Everyone at work has noticed the change in me.
- 2. I am completely forgiven by the Father.

Does the world’s system of evaluating a person govern how you act? The world’s system goes against God’s system, no matter what our standard of performance or whose approval we seek. Realizing that your worth does not depend on meeting some condition will free you from the fears of failure and rejection and will give you joy, thankfulness, and a desire to honor the One who loves you so much.

Underline the truths from our study today.

- The abundant life is the experience of God’s love, forgiveness, and power in the face of life’s problems.
- God has made us in such a way that He is the only One who can meet our need for significance.
- An accurate, biblical self-concept contains both strength and humility, both sorrow over sin and joy about forgiveness, both a deep sense of our need for God’s grace and a deep sense of the reality of God’s grace.

Day 4

The Origin of the Search

In the Scriptures God tells us what we need to know in order to discover our true worth. The Old Testament tells us of sin and the fall of human beings into sin. Read Genesis 3:6-7 in the margin.

To understand the lasting effects of this event, we need to examine the nature of human beings before sin caused them to
lose their sense of security and significance. The first created persons lived in intimate fellowship with God. They were secure and free. In all of God’s creation, no creature compared to them. Indeed, Adam and Eve, the first persons, were magnificent creations, complete and perfect in the image of God, designed to reign over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28).

Their purpose was to reflect the glory of God. God wanted to demonstrate His holiness through humankind (Ps. 99:3-5), love and patience (1 Cor. 13:4), forbearance (1 Cor. 13:7), wisdom (James 3:13,17), comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-4), forgiveness (Heb. 10:17), faithfulness (Ps. 89:1,2,5,8), and grace (Ps. 111:4). Through intellect, free will, and emotions, humankind was to be the showcase for God’s glorious character.

Read Genesis 1:25-31 in your Bible and answer the following questions.

1. How do these verses show that God thought highly of people? (v. 26)

2. What are the two responsibilities God gave to humankind? (v. 28)

3. What was His evaluation of creation after He created people? (v. 31)

Compare what you wrote with these statements.

1. The fact that God made us in His image shows how highly He regards us.
2. God created people to bear God’s image and to exhibit His glory. He gave humans two responsibilities—dominion over the earth and procreation, filling the earth with people who also bore God’s image.
3. Genesis 1:31 reveals that God’s view of creation changed from “good” to “very good” after He created humans.

Before the first persons did a single deed, God said they were very good; therefore, the basis of God’s evaluation could not have been their performance. The first persons were acceptable because God said they were.
Satan Enters the Picture

God also created Satan in perfection, just as He did Adam and his wife Eve. At the time God created him, Satan’s name was Lucifer, which means “morning star.” Lucifer was an angel of the highest rank, created to glorify God. He was clothed with beauty and power and was allowed to serve in the presence of God.

Sadly, Lucifer’s pride caused him to rebel against God. He and a third of the angels were cast from heaven (Isa. 14:12-15, Rev. 12:7-9). When he appeared to Adam and Eve in the garden, he did so in the form of a serpent, “more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Gen. 3:1).

God gave humans authority over the earth, but if they, like Lucifer, rebelled against God, they would lose both their authority and perfection. They would become a slave to sin (Rom. 6:17) and subject to God’s wrath (Eph. 5:6). Therefore, destroying human beings was Satan’s way to reign on earth. He thought it also would overthrow God’s glorious plan for humanity.

Read Galatians 5:19-21. List the sins that Satan has used to try to overthrow God’s glorious plan for us.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

In this morning’s newspaper stories or in last night’s TV news programs what did you read or see that showed people falling to temptation? List specific events.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

To accomplish his goal of overthrowing God’s plan, Satan tempted Eve, who fell for his deception. Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She believed it would make her wise and like God. Then Adam chose to forsake the love and security of God and to sin also.
By sinning, Adam and Eve not only lost the glory God had intended for humankind but also forfeited their close relationship and fellowship with God. Their deliberate rebellion also aided Satan’s purpose. It gave Satan power and authority on earth.

Read Matthew 25:46 in the margin. According to this verse, what is the final outcome of fallen humanity?

Today we see effects of the fall in personal problems, sickness, loneliness, suicide, disputes between people, murder, rape, war, or natural disasters such as drought, famine, and earthquakes.

From that moment on after humanity fell, all history led to a single hill outside Jerusalem, where God appointed a Savior to pay the penalty for people’s sin of rebellion. Though we justly deserve God’s anger because of that deliberate rebellion (our attempts to find security and purpose apart from Him), His Son became our substitute, experienced the wrath our rebellion deserves, and paid the penalty for our sins. Christ’s death represents the most overwhelming evidence of God’s love for us. Because Christ paid for our sins, our relationship with God is restored. We can experience His nature and character, commune with Him, and reflect His love to all the world.

Day 5

Your Relationship with Christ

We cannot understand the truths of God’s Word with human wisdom alone. God the Father has given us the Holy Spirit as a free gift when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Stop for a moment and think about your relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask yourself the question, Have I given my life to Jesus as Lord and my Savior? Before you go any further in this search for significance, settle this question. Without the free gift of salvation that is found only in Jesus Christ, you do not possess the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit you do not possess spiritual understanding, and you never will be able to accept what God’s Word says about you. Turn to page 22 and read Beginning a Relationship with Christ. Then return to this page.
Only Christ Never Fails
We do not have to succeed or please others to have a healthy sense of self worth. God freely has given us our worth. Failure and/or others’ disapproval can’t take it away! It would be nice for my parents (or whomever) to approve of me, but if they don’t approve of me, God still loves and accepts me.

Do you see the difference? The “have-to” mentality is sheer slavery to performance and to the opinions of others, but we are secure and free in Christ. We don’t have to have success or anyone else’s approval. Of course, it would be nice to have success and approval, but the point is clear: Christ is the source of our security; Christ is the basis of our worth; Christ is the only One who promises and never fails.

We can choose two possible options to determine our self-worth:

The world’s system:

Self-worth = Performance (what you do) + others’ opinions (what others think or say about you).

God’s system:

Self-worth = God’s truth about you

The World’s System Versus God’s System

The following are the four false beliefs that Satan uses to undermine God’s purposes. Many of us apply them daily in our relationships and circumstances. Estimate to what degree, from 0 to 100 percent, you live by each of these false standards.

_____% I must meet certain standards to feel good about myself.

_____% I must have the approval of certain others to feel good about myself. (Without their approval I cannot feel good about myself.)

_____% Those who fail (including me) are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished.

_____% I am what I am. I cannot change. I am hopeless. I am the sum total of all my successes and failures, and I’ll never be significantly different.
When we first begin to examine and confront these lies, the percentages may seem high. This is normal. In time these percentages should go down. They represent the beginning of change. To the extent that you believe these lies, the world’s system influences your life. Each belief stems from the concept that your self-worth = performance + others’ opinions.

This book is dedicated to the process of understanding, applying, and experiencing the basic truths of God’s Word. In its chapters we will examine the process of hope and healing. Instead of the four false beliefs that Satan’s deception generates, we will discover God’s gracious, effective, and permanent solution to our search for significance.

Review this week’s lessons. Pray, asking God to identify one or more positive statement(s) that had an impact on your understanding of who you are. Write this statement in your own words or as a prayer of thankfulness to God.

To the extent that you believe these lies, the world's system influences your life.

In week 2 we will dig more deeply into Satan’s lies and the consequences for believing them.
Beginning a Relationship with Christ

Read Titus 3:4-7. Underline the words that tell us how we are saved.

We do not gain acceptance into God’s eternal kingdom based on our good works. We can do no amount of good deeds—religious or otherwise—that will obligate God to save us. Salvation is a gift from God that comes to us when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior who died for all our sins on the cross of Calvary.

Call on the Lord in repentance (literally, turn the other way from sin). Trust Him by faith as your Savior and surrender to Jesus’ lordship, or rule over your life. Sincerely, using the words in the box or using similar words of your own, ask Jesus to become your Savior and Lord.

Dear God, I know that Jesus is Your Son and that He died on the cross for me. He was raised from the dead and is a living Savior. I know that I have sinned and need forgiveness. I am willing to turn from my sins and receive Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for saving me. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer just now, welcome to the family of God. You have just made the most important decision of your life. You can be sure you are saved and have eternal life.

The moment you trust Christ, many wonderful things occur:

- All your sins—past, present, and future—are forgiven (Col. 2:13-14).
- You become a child of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15).
- You receive eternal life (John 5:24).
- You are delivered from Satan to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13).
- Christ comes to live in you (Rev. 3:20). God the Father has given you the Holy Spirit as a free gift when you accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (1 John 3:24).
- You become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- You are declared righteous by God (2 Cor. 5:21).
- You enter a love relationship with God (1 John 4:9-11).

Think of how these truths apply to your life. Look up the Scriptures in your Bible. Then write a prayer in the margin thanking God for His wonderful salvation.