

## Self-Esteem, Self-Image, & Self-Love

### Key Points About Self Esteem

#### I. Understanding the Conscience

- A. The *conscience* can be defined as the faculty of the immaterial heart that judges the thoughts, intentions, words, and deeds of an individual according to the standards given it by God, governing authorities, personally acquired standards (Romans 1:18-20,32, Romans 2:14-15, Romans 13:1-5, Romans 14: 22-23)
- B. Man's *conscience* is an instinctual judge of his thoughts, words, and actions accusing him when he does something that is morally wrong and excusing him when he does something that is morally right. (Romans 2:14-15)
- C. The *conscience* is a universal entity in that all have it whether believer or unbeliever. (Romans 1:18-20, Romans 2:14-15, 1Timothy 3:8-9)

#### II. Understanding Conscience Joy and Conscience Sorrow

- A. When a person makes a choice that is morally right their conscience will produce a joy resulting in one having a *sense of satisfaction* with himself. (Genesis 4:1-7)
- B. When a person makes a choice that is morally wrong their conscience will produce a sorrow resulting in one having a *sense of dissatisfaction* with himself. (Genesis 4:1-7)
- C. This sense of *satisfaction* and *dissatisfaction* with oneself is where we see the concept of *self-esteem* coming together.

#### III. Definition of Positive and Negative Self Esteem

- A. Definition of *Positive Self-Esteem*- satisfaction with one's self, self- respect, sense of assurance (conscience joy).
- B. Definition of *Negative Self-Esteem* - dissatisfaction with one's self, low self-respect, sense of insecurity (conscience sorrow).
- C. They are the by-product of right and wrong *choices*.

#### IV. Positive self-esteem is a by-product of doing what is right (Genesis 4:6-7).

- A. *Positive self-esteem* is characterized by a clear conscience (peace) (Romans 2:14-15).
- B. *Positive self-esteem* is characterized by confidence from within the heart (Proverbs 28:1).
- C. When one responds in the right way to any and all types of circumstances it will produce *Positive self-esteem* (conscience joy) which is produced at the root by the work of the conscience (1John 3:21).

#### V. Negative self-esteem is a by-product of living in sin(Genesis 4:6-7).

- A. *Negative self-esteem* is characterized by a guilty conscience (Romans 2:14-15).

- B. **Negative self-esteem** is characterized by fearfulness within the heart (Proverbs 28:1).
- C. When one responds in the wrong way to any and all circumstances it will produce **Negative self-esteem** (conscience sorrow) which is produced at root by the work of the conscience (1 Samuel 24:1-7).

**VI. When a unbeliever has positive self-esteem it is the by-product of appeasing the work of the law written in his heart (Romans 2:14-15) (Conscience Joy).**

- A. As a **non-believer** lines up to the dictates of his conscience it will aid in his mental soundness by delivering him from the negative effects of a sense of guilt until the Holy Spirit convicts him of his sinful condition before a Holy God. (Romans 2:15, John 16:8-11)
- B. The peace the **non-believer** gets from lining up with his conscience is what we call conscience joy which is universally experienced by believer and unbeliever (Romans 2:15, Proverb 28:1)
- C. This is why **Positive self-esteem** occurs in an unbeliever (Romans 2:14-15) (Conscience Joy)

**VII. In the worse case, when an unbeliever has positive self-esteem it is the by-product of searing or numbing his conscience to the sense of guilt and the conscience sorrow (negative self-esteem) that results (Romans 1:28-32, Ephesians 4:17-19, Romans 2:14-15, John 14:27)**

- A. As a non-believer **sears or numbs** his conscience, he no longer feels the conscience sorrow/ negative - self esteem that results from a guilty conscience even though he is aware of his guilt before God. (Romans 1:32, Ephesians 4:17-19, 1 Timothy 4:1-2)
- B. The non-believer experiences **joy** as a result of doing something right (conscience joy/ positive self-esteem) but not sorrow that comes from wrong doing because he has numbed or seared his conscience to the feelings of guilt that bring the conscience sorrow/ negative self-esteem. He is aware of the guilt before God but is not experiencing the conscience sorrow/ negative self-esteem with the awareness. (Romans 2:14-15, Ephesians 4:17-19, Romans 1:28-32, 1 Timothy 4:1-2)

- C. The non-believer experiences the **peace** that world gives but not the sorrow that comes from wrong doing because he has numbed or seared his conscience to the feelings of guilt that bring the conscience sorrow/negative self-esteem. He is aware of the guilt before God but is not experiencing the conscience sorrow/ negative self-esteem with the awareness. (John 14:27, Ephesians 4:17-19, 1 Timothy 4:1-2)

## Key Points About Self Image

### **I. Understanding Pride (Psalm 10:3-4, Romans 8:5-7, Acts 12:21-23, Daniel 4:31-32)**

- A. **Pride** can be defined as a mind set on self with resistance to the will of God.
- B. A **prideful person** raises his standard for thinking, speaking and behaving above God's standard.
- C. A **prideful person** has a view of himself that is based on his opinions and ideals apart from the Truth of God's Word.

### **II. Understanding Humility (John 3:26-30, Romans 12:3, Romans 8:5-7)**

- A. **Humility** is a mind set on Christ with submission to the will of God.
- B. **Humility** is embracing a view of one's self according to the standards of God not the opinions of man or his own views.
- C. A **Humble** person adjust his standards to align with will of God.

### **III. Definition of Self Image**

- A. One's **perspective** of himself.
- B. One's **understanding** of who he is and who he is not.
- C. One's **perspective** of his role in life.

### **IV. If one builds his self image on the opinions of others, the culture and personal opinions he will develop an inaccurate self image.**

- A. It will lead the person to have an **inaccurate assessment** of themselves before God (Luke 18:9-14).
- B. This person will ultimately be **trusting** in mankind and his own flesh to understand himself which leads him away from Truth and from God (Jeremiah 17:5-6).
- C. This person will be **walking** in earthly, natural, demonic wisdom (James 3:13-16).

### **V. If one builds his self image on what God says is true about him according to Scripture he will develop an accurate self image.**

- A. It will be based on what God's Word says is **true** about himself (John 8:31-32).
- B. This person ultimately will be **trusting** in Jesus Christ to explain who he is and who he is not (John 8:31-32).
- C. This person will be **walking** in Heavenly, Spiritual, Godly wisdom (Romans 12:2-3).

## Key Points About Self Love

### I. Understanding Love

- A. **Eros**—love that is based on erotic pleasure. The greater the pleasure one gets from the other person, the greater the love one has for that person; the lesser the pleasure one gets from that person the less love they have for that person; it is conditioned upon pleasure.
- B. **Stergo**—love that is conditioned upon the fact that we have kinship (ex. Brother, Cousin, Uncle etc.). Since we are family I treat you okay but if we were not family I would not have any dealings with you; it is conditioned upon family connection.
- C. **Phileo**—love that is based upon affection for the person according to some attraction to them, like interest, common goals or aspirations. The more attraction one feels, pleasure one has or common interest that is developed the more they love the other person; the less attraction one feels, the less pleasure one has with the other person or the less they have in common with the other person they loose love for the other person; it is conditioned upon attraction and common interest or pleasures.
- D. **Agape**—love that is based upon the power of God to seek the highest of good of others unconditionally, no strings attached. “It is concerned not with how we feel but how we act. It responds not to the attractiveness of the other person but to the condition and need of the other person. Its motivation is not the selfish desire to enjoy the other person but the selfless desire to benefit him. Essentially, it is concerned and benevolent toward others.”<sup>1</sup>

### II. The love that God primarily commands is agape love (Matthew 22:34-40, John 14:21).

- A. To love God is to keep His **commandments** as given in His Word.
- B. To love others is to seek the **highest** good of others and not to cause any harm to others.
- C. God does not command us to love **ourselves**.
- D. **Self Love** is not something that has to be taught or commanded because it is something we already do on various levels.

### III. Definition of Self Love

- A. Regard for one’s **self**.
- B. Regard for one’s **own happiness**.

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<sup>1</sup>James Boyer, *For a World Like Ours: Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1971).

C. Regard for one's *advantage*.

**IV. The Scripture implies that we already love ourselves:**

- A. **Selfish Self Love** – making self the priority for life; making self the central interest of existence (2Timothy 3:1-5).
- B. **Self Preserving Self Love** – the natural tendency to take care of ourselves and preserve our material bodies (Ephesians 5:28-29).
- C. **Soul Loving Self Love** – one's effort to gain wisdom and live accordingly in order guard and protect one's heart (Proverb 19:8).

**V. Scripture teaches that selfish self love leads to difficulty (2Timothy3:1-2).**

- A. Preoccupation with self breeds *selfishness* (James 3:13-4:7).
- B. Preoccupation with self breeds *conflict* with others (James 3:13-4:7).
- C. Preoccupation with self produces *disorder* and every evil thing (James 3:16).

**VI. Scripture teaches us to deny selfish self love (Luke 9:23-26)**

- A. We are to focus on becoming like **Christ** in all aspects of life (Eph. 4:11-16).
- B. We are to focus on the **kingdom agenda** of God (Luke 12:13-48).
- C. We are no longer to live for *ourselves* but for Christ (2Corinthians 5:11-21).

**The Premise of Self-Image**

*Even though we are not to focus on improving our self-esteem, we are called to think soberly about ourselves (Self Image).*

**Definition of Self Image** - One's perspective of himself; one's understanding of who he is, who he is not; one's perspective of his role in life

**I. We are commanded to have a sober view of ourselves (Romans 12:3).**

- A. We are to have **right** thinking about ourselves (Romans 12:3).
- B. We are to see ourselves according to **God's** Standard (Ephesians 2:1-22).
- C. We must not view ourselves according to personal **opinions** (Galatians 6:3).

**II. We must view ourselves as created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-31).**

- A. We were created to reflect God's **Character** (Genesis 1:26-31).
- B. We were created to be **relational** (Genesis 2:18).
- C. We were created to be **worshippers** of God (John 4:23-24).

- D. We have been designed with *intellect* (Proverbs 23:7).
- E. We have been designed with a *will* (Ecclesiastes 2:4-8).
- F. We have been designed with *emotions* (Acts 20:36-38).

**III. We must view ourselves according to our biological design (Genesis 1:26-27).**

- A. If we were created male we must view ourselves according to our *male* distinctions and functions (1 Corinthians 11:1-12).
- B. If we were created female we must view ourselves according to our *female* distinctions and functions (1 Corinthians 11:1-12).

**IV. We must view ourselves according to our position in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).**

- A. Man in Christ is *forgiven* of His sin against God (1 John 2:1-2).
- B. Man in Christ is placed in the *family* of God (Ephesians 2:11-19).
- C. Man in Christ is made *alive* from within to connect with God (Ephesians 2:1-10).
- D. Man in Christ is given the *Holy Spirit* to empower him to live as God desires (Romans 8:12-17).
- E. Man in Christ is *set apart* to God and made useful and pleasing to God through the power of the Holy Spirit working in him (Ephesians 2:8-10).

**V. We must view ourselves according to the Biblical Roles we have been given.**

- A. We must view ourselves as a *Husband/Wife* (Eph. 5:18-33, Col. 3:18-19, I Peter 3:1-12).
- B. We must view ourselves as a *Son/Daughter* (Eph. 6:1-2, Col. 3:20).
- C. We must view ourselves as a *Parent* (Eph. 6:4, Col. 3:21, Deut. 6:6-9, Prov. 22:6).
- D. We must view ourselves as a *Friend* (Prov. 27:5-6, Prov. 17:17, Prov. 27:9, Prov. 18:24).
- E. We must view ourselves as a *Leader* (I Tim. 4:16, Heb. 13:7, 17; I Peter 5:5, I Tim. 5:17-22, Luke 6:40).
- F. We must view ourselves as a *Employer/Employee* (Eph. 6:5-9, I Peter 2:18-29).

**VII. We must view ourselves according to our Spiritual Giftedness (1 Peter 4:10).**

- A. We must see ourselves as *servants* with gifts to benefit the body (1 Peter 4:10-11).
- B. We must know what our *gifts* are (1 Corinthians 12:1-11).
- C. We must use our *gifts* accordingly (Romans 12:3-8)

**Key Point:** *Self Esteem is a result not a pursuit. Therefore, Christians should be concentrating on loving God and others in the power of the Holy Spirit and not upon improving their “self esteem”. As he loves consistently, the result will be positive self-esteem. As he is unloving the result will be negative self-esteem. Even though we are not to focus on improving our self-esteem we are called to think soberly about ourselves. This is where we understand the concept of Self Image. This differs from having dissatisfaction or satisfaction with ourselves. (self esteem) Self image is the evaluation of how one sees his role and position in life. Also we need to understand that loving self is an implied reality that fits in three categories. (Self-centered, Self Preserving, Soul loving) Once we*

*understand the categories of self love we will have a better understanding of what it means to deny ourselves. (Romans 2:14-17, Proverbs 28:1, Genesis 4:6-7, Romans 12:3, Ephesians 5:28-29)*