

A photograph of a man with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and dark jeans. He is sitting outdoors, with his hands clasped together in front of his face, looking down with a thoughtful or prayerful expression. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting.

problems people face
What am I Worth?

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- Selfishness
- When God doesn't explain why
- What am I worth?
- Worry

Scripture is taken from the Holy Bible,
New International Version and The New
Living Bible.

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NOTES

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What am I Worth?



Mike Robinson.

The Importance of Having a True Sense of Self-worth

There was a time when I received a phone call from a local hospital asking if I would come and talk with a young man who, earlier that night, had tried to take his own life. As we talked a story unfolded about how his father had, for years, belittled him, criticised him in front of his friends and generally made him feel worthless.

This young man had come to believe all that his father said about him and, because he believed he was worthless, he had reached the point where there seemed no reason to keep on living. He thought the only thing to do was to end his life.

Not too long after that night I was again phoned and asked to visit a young lady who was suicidal. Earlier that day she had told her husband the great news that she was expecting their first baby. He then told her that he was leaving her to live with another woman. She was devastated. She was left feeling worthless. Like the young man, she felt that her life had no value and she should end it.

Do you like the person you see in the mirror each morning? The truth is that many of us are not sure how we feel about that person.

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOUR

If God has been speaking to you as you have read this booklet and if you are willing now to take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, here is what you should do:

Confess – tell God in your own simple words that you are a sinner, needing a Saviour. (Read Romans 3:23)

Accept – tell God that you see Jesus Christ as your only Saviour and will accept Him now. (Read Romans 6:23)

Believe – that Jesus Christ has saved you because you asked Him to do so. (Read Romans 10:13)

If you have made this decision today then sign your name here and tell someone else what you have done. Join a church where you can hear God's Word preached and have fellowship with other believers.

I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in God's sight.

I accept Jesus Christ now as my Saviour.

I thank Him for saving me.

Date ____/____/____

Very few people like themselves. Some hate themselves. Most are not sure how they feel about themselves. I think it is fair to say that each of us has aspects about ourselves that we like and aspects that we don't like.

If I asked you to write down three things that you like about yourself and three things that you don't like about yourself, which list would you find the easiest to complete? Most people would find it easier to list what they did not like about themselves.

Feelings of worthlessness abound in our culture today. In these brief pages we will explore:

- a) How these feelings negatively affect us and our relationships.
- b) The factors that can cause people to feel they have no value to themselves, to others and, most of all, to God.
- c) How to develop a more positive sense of self-worth.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF A LOW SELF-IMAGE?

In the same way that we should look after our physical bodies, it is important that we also care for the health and well-being of our emotional life. This is a dimension of our lives that affects how we see ourselves; i.e. how we feel about the person in the mirror. We can very easily become victims of negative thinking.

Some of this negative thinking comes about because we often fail to distinguish between human pride and legitimate self-worth or self-image. It's important that we understand the difference between unhealthy human pride and legitimate self-worth.

Human pride in its negative sense is simply a self-centered, personal appraisal of ourselves based on self-effort. You may have heard the expression "a self-made man" or "a self-made woman". These are people who think their achievements are the sole result of what they have done and they become proud in their own eyes.

Having a true or accurate sense of self-worth involves a God-centered appraisal of our lives based on God's work in our lives and His evaluation of us.

The Apostle Paul has a very helpful insight on this subject when he says:

'For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.' (Romans 12:3)

We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. But nor should we think of ourselves more lowly. The Bible says we are to think of

experienced God's love in your life. Here's a simple prayer that, if you pray it sincerely, invites the Lord Jesus Christ into your life.

Lord Jesus, I ask you to come into my life. Although I feel unworthy of your love, I thank you that you will now cleanse me from my sin and reveal to me that I am worthy of your love and grace.

to a healthy, accurate and liberated self-image and self-worth.

1. Will you continue to listen to and believe the distorted messages from your childhood?
2. Will you continue to look at yourself through the mirror of other people's opinions?
3. Will you continue to allow Satan's lies and accusations to be the ultimate "put down"?

OR

4. Will you begin to listen to, believe in and act upon what God says about your worth and value?

The key to adopting No. 4 has to do with what the Bible calls the "renewing of your mind". Self effort won't do it. Here's how the New Living Translation puts Romans 12:2

*'Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, **but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.'*

Maybe you are struggling with a sense of being largely worthless because you have not yet

ourselves with "sober judgment" which means to think about ourselves "accurately" – not too highly and not too lowly (or negatively).

Let's think about the impact of negative thinking when it comes to our sense of self-worth:

It cripples our potential.

In Numbers 13:33 we read about the nation of Israel as they prepared to take possession of the Promised Land. As they looked at the forces that opposed them, they said:

'We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.'

Despite the promises of God and His reassurance of their victory, God's people compared themselves to grasshoppers and assumed that their opponents saw them the same way. Instead of going into the land and conquering it, they withdrew in fear and it was not until 40 years later that they again had the opportunity to possess the land.

Wrong thinking leads inevitably to wrong action.

Low or non-existent self-worth can paralyse our God-given potential, gifts and abilities so that we are rendered largely or completely inactive. This kind of negative thinking limits or cripples our potential.

It damages our relationships.

Our relationship with God is negatively impacted and becomes performance-based. We say “How could God love someone like me? I must try to make myself more worthy of His love.” So we try to become more worthy.

This low self-worth also affects our relationship with others because our sense of inferiority and inadequacy causes us to either withdraw from others or to try so hard to win approval that we drive people away.

It sabotages our ministry.

Because our ministry or service for God becomes performance-based, that ministry becomes a duty to be performed rather than a joy to be fulfilled. Like the older son in the story of the Lost Son (Luke 15), we depend upon our efforts to be accepted by God, our Heavenly Father.

HOW IS OUR SELF-IMAGE FORMED?

It will help us if we can understand some of the factors that contribute to the formation of our self-image or self-worth.

Personal Factors

This is the life of our inner world – the person we were born to be with all the variety of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual attributes given to us at birth. These include our capacity to grow

graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.’
(Romans 8:31-34)

5. God plans for me so carefully

‘O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You both precede and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to know!’
(Psalm 139:1-6 NLT)

6. God delights in me so abundantly

‘The LORD your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.’ (Zeph.3:17)

CONCLUSION:

We are now confronted with a choice. Will we believe what God says about our value or will we believe what Satan says about us? To receive and believe what God says about us is the key

these affirmations in the writings of Dr David Seamands. (Dr Seamands was a missionary in India for many years before becoming a Seminary Professor in Wilmore, Kentucky, U.S.A.)

1. God loves me so deeply

'This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.' (1 John 4:9,16)

2. God honours me so highly

'Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' (1 John 3:2)

3. God values me so completely

'You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' (Romans 5:6-8)

4. God provides for me so fully

'What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all--how will He not also, along with Him,

and mature. They also include the handicaps, deformities etc. that are the legacy of being born in sin and into a sinful world.

We may not be as athletic as someone else. Others may be more capable academically. Our physical appearance might not be as "handsome" or as "pretty" as some others we know. Sadly, these are the benchmarks by which our society measures success and worth. They are not God's benchmarks.

All these aspects can combine to make us think and feel less than valued by our peers. Our sense of self-worth takes a nose dive and we become the victim of our own negative thinking.

Social Factors

These are all the experiences and the influences in our life and relationships to this point in time. The major influences in our formative years are those of our parents and 'significant others' – people whose opinions about us carry more weight than others, for better or for worse. We see ourselves reflected in the mirror of other people's words, actions and attitudes towards us.

Other social factors include possessions, education, social standing etc. "I was always the last to be picked for the sporting team". "I'm never invited to birthday parties."

Spiritual Factors

Satan exploits our emotional wounds by reinforcing our feelings of inferiority, inadequacy and worthlessness. He finds ways to belittle us with lies, accusations and half-truths. Since we already feel that we are not worth much to ourselves, to others or to God, we are wide open to believe any further evidence of our unworthiness.

However, on the other side of this spiritual dimension, is the God who alone has a complete, accurate and trustworthy understanding and evaluation of each of us. He loves us with an unending, unconditional love and acceptance. He sees our worth and that is why He paid such a huge price to bring us back to Himself. He sent His Son to die for us because He values us so highly.

The Bible makes it very clear that there is a huge battle going on and you and I are in the centre. It is a battle for our minds; i.e. how we think....how we think about everything. This is especially true when it comes to how we think about ourselves – negatively or positively.

Some years ago a book entitled, “The Power of Positive Thinking” became very popular. But this is NOT what I am advocating in this booklet. I am appealing for you to simply believe what God says about your worth and value.

HOW CAN I RECOVER MY TRUE SELF-WORTH?

Self-belittling and self-hate do NOT equal true humility. On the contrary, to speak negatively about yourself is just as powerful as someone else speaking negatively about you.

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Luke 10:27)

According to this verse, we are to love in 3 directions. We are to love God, love ourselves and love our neighbour. We can accept the first (love God) and the third (love our neighbour). But we really struggle with the second aspect – loving ourselves. We easily associate the idea of loving ourselves with pride and arrogance.

The fact is that we cannot love others freely and with no hidden agendas until we can love ourselves....accept ourselves.....be at peace with ourselves..... because God loves us and accepts us. Our value is not in what we do, where we work, how hard we minister, how much we have, the level of our education, our appearance or our ability. The basis of our self-esteem is in who God says we are!!

Here are 6 affirmations that can destroy the distortions about your value and restore the truth. I would encourage you to memorise them and say them often. Some years ago I found