

## Are You Worthy?

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Causes of Low Self-Worth 2
- Self-Acceptance 3
- From Self-Hate to Love 3
- God's Desire 4

Look-up the term *self-worth* in the dictionary and you'll find definitions like: the sense of one's own value or worth as a person; self-esteem; self-respect. The inherent danger in such a definition is that we might come to think too highly of ourselves—we might become prideful. Because of this danger exists, as Christians we tend to overcompensate and think we're worth-less. Such a matter can prove to be just as dangerous as being puffed-up with pride.

So where can we find truth and balance in the matter of self-worth? Let us not lean on our own understanding; rather, let's turn to God's word. With respect to our sense of worth, the Bible is clear: First, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (see Ps. 139:14). The Hebrew word used here for "fearfully" is *yare'* (yaw-ray'); meaning: to fear, but also to revere. When we experience awe, we tend to revere that which we're in awe of.

When we come to know God as our Creator, we then revere the fact that He made the cosmos; and saw fit to create us as an integral part of His plan. Such understanding allows us to find our place *within* God's creation. We experience the magnitude of God and His love for that which He has created. So we revere Him.

Yet, King David also wrote that we are "wonderfully" made. The Hebrew word used here is *palah* (paw-law'); meaning: to distinguish, show marvelous, set apart. In other words, humanity is set-up in a rather distinguished and marvelous way. Originally, we were created to reflect God's moral character. Our Heavenly Father's intent was also that we would choose to have a loving relationship with Him. Yet, in order for there to be true love, God needed to allow there to be free-will. In other words, God allows us to choose or deny Him.

When we deny our Creator—when we seek to do our own will over His will, we then fall into sin. It is our sin that separates us from our Father. It is not God that separates Himself from us—He's omnipresent; rather, we separate ourselves from God by not choosing Him. This points to the fact that we are dichotomous beings; we have two opposing natures. The apostle Paul touched upon this matter (see Romans 7:14-25).

Thus, we can conclude that we have tremendous worth in God's eyes. We are the pearl the merchant sold everything for (see Matt. 13:45, 46); and Jesus is the merchant who gave His all in order to purchase us. This tells us our worth is rooted in Christ. We each have tremendous worth; but we must not forget the Source of that worth. Are we worthy of God's love? Yes! Revere *Him* as the ultimate Source of love.

## Self-love

In volume 13 of Resources for Christian Counselors (1988), David Carlson wrote about the topic of self-love; stating that he believed it included three key points:

1. Accepting myself as a child of God who is lovable, valuable and capable.
2. Being willing to give up consid-

ering myself to be the center of the world.

3. Recognizing my need for God's forgiveness and redemption.

Carlson went on to write, "Christian self-esteem results from translating "I am the greatest, wisest, strongest, best" to "I am what I am, a person made in God's image, a

sinner redeemed by God's grace, and a significant part in the body of Christ."

5330 Office Center Ct.  
Suite #27  
Bakersfield, CA. 93309

Ph: 661.324.4070

E-Mail:  
info@kcmcounseling.com

Web:  
www.kcmcounseling.com



# Causes for Low Self-Worth

Dr. Gary Collins lists several key points with respect to low self-worth. What follows are excerpts from his writings on this subject:



“Believers have been forgiven, adopted into God’s family, and endowed with special gifts and responsibilities that enable them to serve Christ and the church more effectively.”

1. *Faulty Theology.* Any of us will feel inferior if we assume that all humans are worthless, that sin makes us of no significance to God, and that the way to be humble is to condemn ourselves while we deny the gifts and abilities that the Lord God has given to each of his children. Each of these views is held by sincere people, many of whom apparently assume, incorrectly, that self-esteem is wrong or that feelings of inferiority should typify committed Christians... Believers have been forgiven, adopted into God’s family, and endowed with special gifts and responsibilities that enable them to serve Christ and the church more effectively. When we deny the existence of these gifts, we are engaged in self-deception rather than self-denial.

2. *Sin and Guilt.* When God created human beings, He gave us a standard of right and wrong, guidelines for living in accordance with His universal principles. When we violate these principles, we are guilty and as a result we feel remorse and disappointment in ourselves. This contributes to our feelings of inferiority and undermines self-esteem.

3. *Past Experience.* In a society that values success, it is difficult to experience failure, rejection, and criticism. If we have failed frequently or

are belittled often, it is easy to conclude, “I’m no good. Look at what people think of me. Look how I mess things up.” Sometimes failure comes, not because we have tried and failed, but because others expect us to fail. In situations like this it is easy for a person to conclude, “Nobody expects me to succeed or be liked so why should I try?” When we don’t try, failure is assured and self-esteem is eroded further.

4. *Parent-Child Relationships.* Counselors generally agree that the basis for a child’s self-esteem is formed during his or her early years. Inferiority and self-esteem, therefore, often arise in the home when there is:

- Criticalness and shaming tactics
- Unrealistic standards
- Repeated and harsh punishment
- Intimacy avoidant (e.g., lack of cuddling, hugging, etc.)
- Telling children they’re a nuisance, stupid, or incompetent
- Overprotective or dominance on the part of the parent

5. *Faulty Thinking.* Sometimes we assume that high achievers and successful people rarely have doubts about their abilities and competency, but this is not necessarily true. There is evi-

dence that many high achievers reach their goals but feel insecure in the positions of success. It is common for each of us to believe and sometimes to make up statements about ourselves that have little or no basis in reality. “Nobody likes me” or “I’m no good” are ideas that may contain more fantasy than realism. If it is not to control us, such thinking must be challenged, perhaps by some realistic self-talk. Where, one might be asked, is the real evidence to support the conclusions we hold about ourselves?

6. *Community Influences.* Every society has values that are emphasized by the mass media and demonstrated in homes, schools, governments, businesses, and social settings. It is the thought that the possession of such symbols as: intelligence, physical attractiveness, education, money, power and achievements increases one’s self-esteem; and the lack of such symbols increases one’s sense of inferiority. This is a cultural myth that motivates many people but leads to lowered self-esteem when the status symbols are not attained, when they are attained and found to be meaningless, or when they are acquired and then lost.

---

*These points were excerpted from Dr. Gary Collin’s book—[Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide](#) (W Publishing Group, 1988), pgs. 317—319.*

# Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance is having the proper attitude toward oneself. Which raises the question: What is the *proper* attitude in such matters? The following passages of Scripture help to answer this question. Meditate on the following points from the New International Version and see what God reveals:

- “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one

of them came to be.” (Psalm 139:13-16).

- “The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever— do not abandon the works of your hands.” (Psalm 138:8).
- “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Eph. 2:10).
- “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10).
- “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John

17:3).

- “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8).
- “You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody.” (2 Corinthians 3:2, NIV).
- “...you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.” (Colossians 2:10)
- “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

*“I never really gave much thought to how I felt about my father’s drinking and womanizing. I’d just focus on what I thought I could do to make him love me.”*

## From Self-Hate to Love

Cedric first came to counseling feeling a significant lack of worth. He recounted how, as a young boy, he felt responsible for much of the trouble his family experienced. He stated, “I’m to blame for our problems; things would have been better had I achieved more.” Cedric recounted that his father was gone for days-at-a-time, “I really didn’t understand it then, but as I got older I began to see that my dad was an alcoholic and womanizer. He’d work hard for a week or two, then on pay-day he’d head to the bar where he’d drink away the family’s money and sleep with other women.”

As a child, Cedric came to believe that he was at fault for his father’s behavior, “I thought that if I could get good grades and do well in sports that my dad would want to be home more often and spend time with us. So I worked hard, pretty much got A’s in school, and was always one of the top performers in the sports I played. But you know, I really think if I was better, then dad would have come around more. I made state finals, but was never able to bring home the championship or title. He would have been so proud to see me get those. I needed to work harder.”

Cedric’s parents divorced when he turned eighteen. “Mom told me she never wanted to leave him while I was still at home. But when I left for college, she called it quits. I was angry when I found-out. How could she just leave him after being married all those years? Where was he going to go?”

In adulthood, Cedric was still attempting to gain his father’s love and approval. “I call him all the time and try to see him as often as possible. Most times, if I want to be with him I’ve got to meet him at the bar. I worry about my dad, I’m afraid something bad is going to happen to him one day. If it ever did, I’d feel ashamed. I really believe it’s my job to watch-out for him.”

In the beginning of counseling, it was hard for Cedric to see the error of his father’s ways. “Everybody wants to see him fail; he’s got nobody else but me.” Over time, Cedric came to better understand it was his father who failed him; that he had important needs and his father fell short of meeting those needs due to his own issues—issues that really had nothing to do with Cedric. “I never really gave much thought to how I felt about my father’s

drinking and womanizing. I’d just focus on what I thought I could do to make him love me.”

Cedric also came to understand that he had actually turned his anger with his father inward and developed self-loathing toward himself. “I remember feeling so angry with myself. I hated the fact that I’d try so hard and nothing seemed to change with my dad. At times, it seemed like the harder I worked to get him to love me, the less he’d show it.”

With the understanding that his father’s behavior had nothing to do with him, Cedric began to move-off of his self-loathing. Eventually, he participated in an intervention; wherein, his father made the decision to get help for his alcoholism. Three years later, Cedric’s father is still working an active program of sobriety; he’s also worked hard to repent of his ways and has made amends to those he’s hurt. Cedric himself has come to see that his worth was never really to be found in his relationship with his father; today, his worth is tied-up in Christ Jesus.



## KINGDOM COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

5330 Office Center Court, Suite #27

Phone: 661-324-4070

E-mail: [info@kcmcounseling.com](mailto:info@kcmcounseling.com)

Web: [www.kcmcounseling.com](http://www.kcmcounseling.com)

Kingdom Community Ministries (KCM) exists to serve the Body of Christ by offering biblically-based, Christ-centered counseling services. Our mission is to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ by bringing counselees into a personal relationship with the Lord; and helping them to overcome the crippling effects of sin and guilt. KCM counselors are licensed ministers with graduate level degrees in Ministry with emphasis in Christian Counseling; however, we are not licensed psychotherapists. We offer evening appointments, and a sliding scale payment plan for those who qualify. Your prayerful consideration of our services is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

# Self-Hate Is Not God's Desire

Without a doubt, the issues of self-worth and self-esteem are hot-button topics within the Body of Christ. On one extreme, there are those who assert that nothing about ourselves should be viewed as worthy and esteemed; on the other hand, there are those who posture that because God is love (1 John 4:8) anything goes (e.g. homosexuality, infidelity, etc.); in other words, whatever makes *me* happy is okay because God never stops loving me. So where does the truth lie?

Clearly, we are God's creation (see Ps. 139:13-16; Eph. 2:10), and Scripture reveals that His creation is good (see Gen. 1:31; Ps. 33:5, 6). From this perspective we can conclude there is worth and value in us as human beings. Yet, it is also clear there are things that exist within God's creation that are not good—such as sin (i.e. thoughts/behaviors that fall outside of God's will). Scripture reveals that; while God forgives our sins (see Ex. 34:7) and remembers them no more (see Jer. 31:34), God does punish for sin (see Ex. 32:34).

So which is it? Does God forgive sin or does He punish sin? The answer is—He does both.

In order for God to forgive our sin, there are things we must be willing to do:

1. Acknowledge our sin (see Ps. 32:5)
2. Confess our sin (see Ps. 51:3, 4)
3. Be contrite over our sin (see Ps. 38:18)
4. No longer serve sin (see Rom. 6:6)
5. Subdue our sin (Rom. 6:14-22)
6. Lay sin aside and resist it (Heb. 12:1, 4).

Obviously, in order to accomplish these things, we're going to need to lay our pride aside and humble ourselves. But does such an act require that we demean ourselves as well—that we enter into self-loathing? I do not believe so.

Hating ourselves is not God's desire. I believe He wants us to better understand our worth from *His* perspective; as we do so, we then come into a clearer understanding of the significance of our life. But

we also come to better understand our place within God's creation. While our being here very much has significance in God's plan and purpose; we are not the center of it all. We have an important part to play in God's plan, but we must understand that it is but a *part* of His plan.

As we come into a better understanding of our worth; we also come to experience the significance of God's love, grace and mercy. When we experience the nature of our Creator, we can then more readily work to move-off of *our* will and follow after *God's* will. However, we need not attempt to accomplish this by degrading that which God created. We need not think lowly of ourselves; rather, we must work to gain God's perspective of who we are. I believe then, and only then, can we effectively humble ourselves and follow after Him.

---

*Dr. Michael Mannia is founder of Kingdom Community Ministries. He holds a Masters in Theology and a Doctorate in Ministry; both with an emphasis in Christian Counseling. He can be reached at: 661.324.4070 or [drm@kcmcounseling.com](mailto:drm@kcmcounseling.com).*