

DISCIPLESHIP / COUNSELING CLASS SPECIAL STUDY – SELF-ESTEEM

Compiled by Pastor Phil Layton

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Scriptures referenced for further study (in NASB unless otherwise stated, bold added):

1. INTRODUCTION

Psalms 1:1 (NKJV) ¹ Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in **the counsel of the ungodly**

1 Thessalonians 5:21: But **examine everything carefully**; hold fast to that which is good;

Acts 17:11: Now these [the Bereans] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.**

2. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT “NEEDS?”

James 2:15-16: If a brother or sister is without clothing and **in need of daily food**, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them **what is necessary for their body**, what use is that?

Matthew 9:12-13: ¹² But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, “*It is* not those who are healthy who **need a physician**, but those who are sick.

Matthew 6:31-34: ³¹ “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’” ³² “For the **Gentiles eagerly seek** all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you **need all these things.**” ³³ “But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ “So **do not worry** about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Luke 10:38-44 (NKJV) ³⁸ Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who also **sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.** ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, **you are worried and troubled about many things.**” ⁴² **But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part**, which will not be taken away from her”

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIV) ¹ But mark this: **There will be terrible times in the last days.** ² **People will be lovers of themselves**, lovers of money, boastful, **proud**, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, **not lovers of the good,** ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—** ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. **Have nothing to do with them.**

3. DOES THE BIBLE MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT “SELF-ESTEEM”?

Proverbs 26:16 (NRSV) “The lazy person is wiser in **self-esteem** . . .” [other translations render this phrase as “own conceit” (KJV), “will think he is more intelligent” (TEV), “consider themselves smarter” (NLT), “thinks he is wiser” (NCV), “is wiser in his own eyes” (NASB, NIV), etc., all negative connotations]

Philippians 2:3 (NKJV) “Let nothing be done through **selfish ambition or conceit**, but in lowliness of mind let each **esteem** others better than **himself.**”

4. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT “ESTEEM”?

2 Samuel 6:22: “I will be **more lightly esteemed** than this and **will be humble in my own eyes ...**”

Isaiah 2:22: **Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?**

Luke 16:15: “...God knows your hearts; for **that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.**

Nehemiah 6:15-16 (ESV) ¹⁵ So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and **fell greatly in their own esteem**, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

Galatians 6:3: For if anyone **thinks he is something when he is nothing**, he deceives himself.

Matthew 5:3: “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Psalms 51:17: “... a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

5. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT “SELF”?

The NT does speak of “self” several times - “lay aside the old self” (Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9). Romans 6:6 says this “self was crucified, in order that our body of sin might be done away with.”

Luke 9:23: “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’”

Matthew 16:24-25: Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself ... For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life [or “self”] for My sake will find it.”

John 12:25: “... he who hates his life [or “self”] in this world will keep it to life eternal.”

2 Corinthians 5:15 “and He died for all, so that they who live might **no longer live for themselves**, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

Romans 14:7-8 “For **not one of us lives for himself** ... for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.”

And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Matt. 23:12)

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up (James 4:10)

6. HOW SHOULD WE HELP THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH WHAT THE WORLD CALLS “LOW SELF-ESTEEM / BAD SELF-IMAGE”?

John 12:43: “... they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Galatians 1:10: “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 2:4: "but just as we have been approved by ... so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

7. HOW DID GODLY BELIEVERS IN THE PAST VIEW THEMSELVES? IN THE BIBLE?

Abraham: "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes"-Gen 18:27

Jacob: "I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant ..." (Genesis 32:10).

Moses: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt? ... Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue" (Ex. 3:11; 4:10).

Job: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

Isaiah: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5).

Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

Paul: "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to Jesus ..." (Roman 7:18, 24).

"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am the foremost of all ... for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life" (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

John the Baptist: "He must increase, I must decrease" (John 3:27, 30).

David: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:3-4)

For Further Study:

A Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Image, Self-Love, by Jay Adams.

Christ-Esteem: Where the Search for Self-Esteem Ends, by Don Matzat (must buy used)
When People Are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man, by Edward Welch.

Pleasing People: How Not to Be an Approval "Junkie," by Lou Priolo.

http://www.albertmohler.com/blog_read.php?id=876 - recent secular studies (including Stanford, NY schools) on self-esteem. "A brilliant article in *New York Magazine* provides a fascinating glimpse into why the movement is crashing and burning ... It seems that a growing body of research indicates that the self-esteem movement ... may be hurting the kids it claims to help ... in 2003 the Association for Psychological Science asked Dr. Roy Baumeister, then a leading proponent of self-esteem, to review this literature. His team concluded that self-esteem was polluted with flawed science ... Baumeister was quoted as saying that his findings were "the biggest disappointment of my career." *Sola scriptura*