



Beacon Education

Supporting world-wide community education

Self acceptance

How much do you love yourself?

- Jesus said, “Love your neighbour as **yourself.**”
Mark 12:31
- Love is choosing the very best for someone, including yourself.
- Do you care for your body? Do you shower, clean your teeth, comb your hair? Most of us respect ourselves by looking after our bodies.

But there's a problem for some

- Are there things you would like to change about yourself?
- Is there a person you would like to be, and not yourself?
- Dwelling on these questions can mean a lack of self-acceptance.

Major symptoms of self-rejection #1

- Inability to trust God – You think God has made a mistake in the way he has made you. You therefore can't trust Him for other things. **Ephesians 2:10** says we are His workmanship.
- Excessive shyness; fear of man - You are afraid that others won't accept you. You can't be yourself. You are always thinking about self. You are always asking yourself, "What do they think of me? Am I good enough? Did they like what I did?"

Major symptoms of self-rejection #2

- Problems making deep friendships and genuine relationships. The beginning of any relationship is unselfishness.
- Concerned about your own needs and not concerned about the needs of others.
- Difficulty in loving others and receiving love from others.

Major symptoms of self-rejection #3

- Excessive self-criticism – “I can’t”

Isaiah 45:9-10 NLT:

“What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator. Does a clay pot argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying, ‘Stop, you’re doing it wrong!’ Does the pot exclaim, ‘How clumsy can you be?’

How terrible it would be if a newborn baby said to its father, ‘Why was I born?’ or if it said to its mother, ‘Why did you make me this way?’”

Major symptoms of self-rejection #4

Two possible ways of showing it, (opposite reactions):

- An attitude of superiority. This reflects deep inferiority, covered up with a big noise and an over-reaction.
- OR, self-consciousness – always concerned about what others think. You think others are talking about you or laughing at you.

Major symptoms of self-rejection #5

- Fashion consciousness – to draw attention to yourself
- Over-emphasis on material things and how you look.
- Self-conscious with those of the opposite sex.

God prescribed us before birth

Read all of Psalm 139

Note verse 16

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

What is self-acceptance?

- Self-acceptance is accepting yourself for the way God made you.
- It is being thankful to God for who you are. He made you. Not to do so is being ungrateful.
- It is seeing yourself as God sees you – not thinking more highly, or more lowly of yourself.

Romans 12:3 “Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.”

NLT

PRIDE

- To think of yourself as more special or important than another, is PRIDE.
- To think of yourself as less special or important than another is PRIDE, (because you tell yourself you are not good enough, and you think you have to better yourself *in your own strength*. You are over concerned about what others think of you, focusing on SELF.)

The difference between self-acceptance and self-esteem

- Self-esteem is ‘esteeming’ yourself, or highly admiring yourself.
- Self-esteem is telling yourself you are special, (even more special than another.)
- Self-acceptance is just accepting yourself as God made you, and thanking Him for the way you are.
- We are all special because we are made in God’s image, but no one is more special than another.

Comparison

A major cause of feeling inferior, or 'not good enough' is **comparison**.

We compare ourselves with others and are afraid that we don't measure up. We want to be like someone else. We envy others for what they are, and feel that we haven't been given those gifts.

Galatians 5:26

“Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”

What does God want us to be?

Read Matthew 5:3-12

Jesus has given us the gold standard of what we should be. These attributes are things we can ALL be.

Blessed are the ... humble, meek, seeking after righteousness, pure in heart and more!

Reasons why some people do not accept themselves

- Physical disability or abnormality

Why did God make me like this? But even people with disabilities can come to accept themselves and be happy in knowing that God loves them and cares for them.

- Inner hurts from the past; deep hurts from relationships – recognize these and pray for healing

Mark 11:25 When you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.”

Symptoms of people who have hurts #1

- Fears – of water, heights, dark, spiders, people
- Resentment – hatred, bitterness, especially towards those who have hurt you.
- Jealousy, temper, anger – people will explode for no apparent reason
- Feelings of rejection
- Constantly apologizing for something they don't need to apologize for

Symptoms of people who have hurts #2

- Fear of speaking out or joining in
- OR showing off and seeking attention
- Perfectionism – it has to be perfect or I have failed!
- Fear of taking action, in case they make a mistake
- Anti-authority

How to gain release #1

- Accept the way God has made you. (Psalm 139:13-16)
- The work is not finished. The Lord within you makes you more beautiful, like the shaping of a rough diamond.

Philippians 1:6 ...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

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How to gain release #2

- Stop comparing yourself with others, especially your physical appearance.
- Inward beauty is not related to outward appearance.
- Do not be influenced by advertising and the world. Happiness comes from thanking God for the way He made you.
- Prayer

Inner Healing

- God is interested in the entire person. Inner scars need healing.
- The name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth. (Song of Solomon 1:3)
- Share your concerns with a trusted mentor or counsellor.
- Ask for prayer.

God knows you #1

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Part of his creation is YOU! Because God made you, God knows you.
- Read Psalm 139:1-18 again.
- There are times in life when you wonder if anyone cares that you are here. Who notices me? How can I be in the middle of a group of people and feel like no one sees me? Do I matter?

God knows you #2

- Do you ever wonder if anyone would ever love you if they really knew what went on inside you?
- God knows what people are like. He knows that we have these feelings. He knows about our habits and quirks.
- We don't need to pretend that we are perfect because God knows what we are really like. He loves us completely, including all of the not-so-perfect stuff inside us.

God knows you #3

- If God really knows us, all of us, how can He still love us? This is a great mystery.
- His love is unconditional! We don't have to wait until we are better or older or thinner or smarter to talk to God. God knows and loves you today.

Reflection

Write your thoughts on how this session has challenged you personally.

OR share with a person you trust.

What steps can you take towards a positive self-image – not thinking of yourself as higher or lower than the way God sees you.