

## **I'm Not Worthy: Dealing with Low Self-Esteem**

Series: It's Somewhere: Looking for Answers

Psalms 8:3-5

May 28, 2017

It's good to be here today.

There are a lot of things in life that can, if we do not identify them or deal with them, hold us back from everything God wants for us.

I always enjoy watching "Mythbusters." The show takes myths and urban legends and see if they can be scientifically proven. For example, they tested whether it is better to walk or run in the rain; which method helped you stay drier. So, if you are leaving the department store to go to your car and it is raining, what should you do? Walk.

Well, during one episode, they dealt with the myth that a new owner of a motorboat went out on his inaugural voyage. According to the myth, everything seemed fine. But when the owner came in to take his boat out of the water, he realized that the boat trailer was not on the back of his truck; he thought it had been stolen. He finally discovered that the trailer was still attached underneath his boat. He had been trying to motor his boat with the trailer still attached to the keel. The Mythbusters proved that a motorboat would barely sail with a trailer attached.

So it is for us. There may be something in our lives that stops us from motoring around the way we were design to, and holds us back like some unseen anchor. We don't even realize that is keeping us from becoming what God has intended us to be.

There are many possible anchors. One of those is the anchor of low self-esteem. So we need to be looking for answers.

If we are honest with ourselves, we all deal with some kind of low self-esteem. It can come from a variety of sources, and be manifested in a variety of ways.

I'm going to admit something to you: there are times in my life when I will hesitate to accept someone else's help. Someone will offer to help me with some ministry or do something nice for me, and I will hesitate to accept their offer. Why? Because if I accept help from someone, it means I'm not self-sufficient, I not able to do everything, be everything, to everyone. It means I'm not Superman. (Yes, I still wear my Superman jammies.) So I say, "Oh, thank you but I got that taken care of. Thanks again."

I remember once I went to the auto parts store to buy a new headlight and windshield wiper blades. The salesperson asked if I would like him to install the wiper blades. I paused, and my low self-esteem started talking to me: "If you say, 'Yes', then you are admitting that you need help, that you can't do it yourself." Stupid, isn't it. I really struggled there for a second or two. I finally agreed, and I'm glad I did. The salesperson went out, and couldn't get the first wiper blades on the car; he had to go back into the store and get another set. I would have been at home in the garage really mad that I couldn't get those blades on. Isn't that silly, but it is a part of my particular issue with low self-esteem, that I'm not smart enough or resourceful enough to do everything.

You see, each and every one of us has some part of our life that we are not proud of, or we think that we are not good enough, or we think people are judging us about things that we do, or we believe that we are ugly or fat or dorky looking or a geek or nerd or stupid.

I don't know if psychologists have determined all the ways humans develop low self-esteem. Maybe it was a parent or a spouse who was never satisfied, who always berated you. Maybe it was a teacher or a coach who told you that you were no good, who never gave you any hope that you could be something. Maybe it was kids at school or people at work who called you names or ostracized you from their network of friends.

A poor self image is a major cause of stress in a marriage. Because people with low self-esteem are essentially uncomfortable with themselves, they tend to keep looking outside themselves for approval. They believe they are unworthy; therefore, they are suspicious of approval when it does come. These people are prone to please other people and are afraid to speak their own opinions. They may become a very destructive, trying to bolster their own ego by cutting other people down.

People with a poor self image frequently are perfectionists, which only reinforces their feelings of inadequacy. They plan too much in a day and never enjoyed the accomplishments they achieve. "Enough" is never enough.

People with low self image frequently are embarrassed because they feel inadequate. They may be very secretive. It's hard for them to be vulnerable or to receive advice and counsel from others. They often procrastinate. "I'll put it off until tomorrow because I'll probably do a better job then." They are so afraid of producing something inferior that they produce little or finish it late.<sup>1</sup>

But no matter how many ways low self-esteem manifests itself, it seems to me that there are two root cases, and I believe they are both spiritual. In my opinion, low self-esteem roots are not from what someone or some group did or said to you, but that these acts by persons resulted from deeper spiritual issues.

**First, I believe that Satan wants to tear you down and pervert your understanding of who you are.** Satan will try to tear you down into thinking you are worthless.

- "You are worthless" so you start to drink and do drugs.
- "You are worthless" so you eat too much.
- "You are worthless" so you get involved with pornography, extramarital sex or prostitution.
- "You are worthless" so you spend money to try to feel better.
- "You are worthless" so you do things to try to impress your friends.

But my friends, that is not how God sees you. You are a precious creation of God, no matter what your parents did or did not do for you, no matter what people say about you. You are of eternal worth to God. Did you hear me? Eternal worth.

The Psalmist wrote,

*"When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers— the moon and the stars you have set in place— what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us? For you (God) made us only a little lower than God (some versions say, "angels") and you (God) crowned us with glory and honor."<sup>2</sup>*

We are worth a great deal to God, so much so that in order to reestablish our relationship with Him, He gave the ultimate sacrifice: dying on a cross for our sins. You mean that much to God. If you hear nothing else today, hear this: you mean a great

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<sup>1</sup> Hendricks, Howard & Jeanne, editors. Husbands and Wives: A Guide to Solving Problems and Building Relationships. Victor Books, 1988, p 68.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 8:3-5 (NLT)

deal to God. Bank on it. Don't let Satan tear you down from this realization. You mean a lot to God.

This is the first root cause of low self-esteem: Satan trying to tear you away from the realization that you are of eternal worth, that you matter to God.

The second root cause of low self-esteem is also a spiritual one, but this time, we bring it on ourselves. That's right, we do it to ourselves; not somebody else, your parents, your spouse, we do it ourselves. And this root cause for low self-esteem happens when we reject God. We must come to a breathtaking conclusion: we cannot revolt against God without revolting against ourselves.

The Bible says that we were created in the image of God.<sup>3</sup> Now, that doesn't mean that we look like God, that God has eyebrows, ears, or our facial features. It means that the spiritual part of us was created in the image of God. We are spiritual beings and are designed to have a spiritual relationship with the One who created us. We were created in the image of God, and if we reject the One who created us, we reject ourselves.

E. Stanley Jones, the Methodist missionary and evangelist who started the Christian Ashram movement, wrote, "We cannot run away from God without running away from ourselves. The sum total of the result of the modern revolt against God is this: we who decided we would not live with God, find that we cannot live with ourselves. A sinner is one who is literally a problem to himself. The hell which modern (society) banished from the universe by politely putting it out at the door, has now come back through the window in the form of neuroses, fears, inhibitions, inner conflicts, guilts. It has moved into the center of our being.<sup>4</sup> Instead of "the kingdom of God is within you," you find that "the kingdom of hell is within you."

This is this second root. **It is ourselves because we reject God, we reject ourselves, and everything else:** our meaning in life, our purpose in and for life, the very worth of our existence, is cast aside. No wonder we feel so bad and have such low self-esteem. When we leave and abandon God, we have nothing left.

Yet God loves us so much that He promises He will never stop loving you, never stop blessing you, never forget you. Doesn't that tell you how much you mean to God? Does that tell you the sacrifice God would make for you? How can you continue to live with such a low view of yourself once you realize this eternal truth?

We can have a right relationship with God by trusting Him on these points. Our outward actions — church attendance, prayer, good deeds — will not by themselves make us right with God. A right relationship is based on faith — the heartfelt inner confidence that God is who He says He is and does what He says He will do. Right actions will follow naturally as by-products.<sup>5</sup>

Faith is the key that opens the door to heaven. You know, you could have a key ring with a lot of keys on it, like this; they will look somewhat alike. But I'll tell you this. If you go to the front door of my house, you could try all of these keys except the right one, and they would not open that door. The right key to heaven is called faith, saving

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:26

<sup>4</sup> Jones, E. Stanley. *Abundant Living*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1970, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Life Application Bible Notes, Genesis 15:6

faith. That is what will open the door to heaven. There is nothing else in the world that will open that door. What is it? Faith!<sup>6</sup>

It is also this faith that will enable you, with God's help, to destroy that low self-esteem that is anchoring you, that is the pitfall you have fallen in. God believes in you, who you are, what you can be, but only through Him.

Are you tired of being anchored down? Are you ready to get out of the pitfall of low self-esteem?

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<sup>6</sup> D. James Kennedy