



FAMILY STUDY

It's Not About Me...



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"It's Not About Me..."

Don't Think Too Much of Yourself!

Perhaps one of the most common struggles that many people have in their lives is an inflated sense of self-importance or self-worth. In Hollywood, and professional sports, and in many other venues we see numerous examples of people who have become conceited about their particular skills or positions.

In addition to these examples of self-centered behavior, we are also told by worldly advisers such as psychologists that we need to place an emphasis on building strong self-esteem in our lives. While the idea of building self-esteem may sound good (who, after all, doesn't want to think highly of themselves?), it is not Biblical. In fact, it is quite UNBIBLICAL, as the following Scripture passages point out:

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| Proverbs 16:19 | Hosea 10:13 | James 4:10 |
| Proverbs 22:4 | Matthew 18:4 | 1 Peter 5:5 |
| Proverbs 28:26 | Romans 12:3 | |
| Proverbs 29:23 | 1 Corinthians 10:12 | |

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself...

Some people are quick to refer to Matthew 22:39, which in part says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." "There! You see?" they might say, "A command for us to love ourselves! Yet, to pull a message of self-love from this verse is to miss the point. Read the surrounding passage:

Matthew 22:36-40

This passage features Jesus answering a question about the Greatest Commandment. The very FIRST person we are commanded to love is God—with all our hearts. Next, we are commanded to love our neighbors *in the same way that we love ourselves*. Self-love is NOT commanded here, but rather ASSUMED, and the self is not the focus of this passage at all, but merely a reference point given for the command to love others. Ephesians 5:29 reinforces this point, pointing out that no one ever hated his own body but instead cares for it. Self-love is not commanded. It is assumed.

We're Basically Good?

A popular feel-good belief is that we humans are all basically good. This is a nice thought, but the trouble is, it's a lie. The Bible paints a much different picture of man, and certainly not a flattering one, as you will see:

Man's General Wickedness

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| Psalms 14:3 | Jeremiah 17:9 | Romans 3:23 |
| Psalms 53:1-3 | Romans 3:12 | 2 Timothy 3:2-5 |

Man's Striving to Exalt Himself

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| Ezekiel 31:10-11 | Obadiah 3 | Luke 14:11 |
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Man's Inherent Selfishness

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| Proverbs 11:26 | Malachi 3:8-10 | 1 Corinthians 13:5 |
| Proverbs 21:13 | Luke 12:15 | |

Man's Belief in His Own Self-Righteousness

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| Luke 18:9 | 1 Corinthians 10:12 |
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Man's Inclination toward Whining and Self-Pity

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| Proverbs 19:3 | Philippians 2:14 | 1 Timothy 6:6 |
| Lamentations 3:39 | Philippians 4:11-13 | Hebrews 13:5 |

Don't Think Too Lowly of Yourself...

While we need to be careful not to think too highly of ourselves, we ALSO need to guard against thinking too LOWLY of ourselves. While it is true that we are all sinners who are wicked at heart, and while it is true that we are nothing apart from God, that doesn't mean we should spend our time berating ourselves for being such miserable worms. We are, after all, created by God, and He DOES have a purpose for us. God made each of us unique, and we are each special to Him—not because we have anything to offer Him, but because He is pleased to treat us as special people.

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| Psalms 139:141 | Romans 8:13-15 | 1 John 3:1-2 |
| John 1:12 | 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 | Galatians 3:26-27 |

The Biblical View of Self...

In the Scripture passages listed above, it is important to note that, although we have a special place in God's eyes, it is not because of US, but rather because of what God has chosen to do WITH us. In all of the above passages, the glory for man's 'special' position goes to God.

Obviously, we need to take care of ourselves as a matter of good stewardship of the lives and bodies the Lord has given us. Beyond that, the primary reason we should have for thinking about ourselves should be to examine our hearts and check to see if we're truly loving and obeying God and are living lives that are pleasing to Him.

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| Psalms 139:23-24 | 1 Corinthians 11:28 |
| Lamentations 3:40 | 2 Corinthians 13:5 |

Deny Yourself!

The actual Biblical message concerning how we should think of ourselves is summarized beautifully in Matthew 16:24, when Jesus says, "If anyone would come after Me, he must DENY HIMSELF and take up his cross and follow Me." Whether we think too highly or too lowly of ourselves, the point is, we're thinking about OURSELVES TOO MUCH! Let your thoughts instead rest with God, whose goodness and holiness are far more worthy of our consideration, and may God bless you as you examine your view of "self" this week!

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| Deuteronomy 6:5 | Isaiah 55:6 | Jude 21 |
| Psalms 105:4 | Matthew 22:36-37 | |