

SELF ESTEEM (1)

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27, NKJV).

As he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul cautioned us not to be haughty (Rom. 11:20). Just a few verses later he phrased it a bit differently: “For I say . . . to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (12:3). There is, then, a proper and healthy self-esteem which we should be careful not to exceed. However, we dishonor God by denigrating ourselves just as we do by being arrogant. Jesus said to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39). If we do not love ourselves, how can we love our neighbors “as ourselves”?

Self-esteem stems from the fact that we are made in the image of God. This sets us apart from the rest of creation. So sacred is human life that after the flood, God told Noah that murder would be a capital crime: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man” (Gen. 9:6). The death penalty is out of place for one who wantonly kills animals, for they are not made in God’s image. Radical animal rights activists may disagree, but Jesus said, “You are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:31).

Quoting the 8th psalm, the Hebrews writer pointed out that God made man “a little lower than the angels” & “crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands” (Hebrews 2:7). This gives us no call to be arrogant, but rather to be humbled and thankful for the high value God places upon us.

Occasionally, when some of my many imperfections come to light, I have protested: “I’m only human!” I ask you to make up your mind, right along with me, that we will not say that again. “Only human” is an insult to the magnificent creative work of God. Let us have a healthy self esteem rooted in the happy truth that we are made in the image of God!