

Self Esteem (2)

Why do I feel badly about myself?

“. . . Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8, NKJV).

Healthy self esteem results from recognizing that we are made in the image of God. Sin, however, mars the image of God, and puts us in need of being “renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created (us)” (Colossians 3:10).

Sin marred the image of God in Adam and Eve. Prior to eating the forbidden fruit, they had enjoyed flawless fellowship with their Heavenly Father. Once they had sinned, however, they became ashamed and afraid. Shame induced their pathetic attempt to cover their nakedness, and fear moved them to try in vain to hide from God.

Jesus illustrated the burdensome nature of sin in Luke 7 by telling a parable about two debtors. One’s debt was far greater than the other’s, so he felt a greater love for the creditor for canceling the debt. Even monetary debt can negatively impact one’s self esteem; but the point of Jesus’ parable was not financial. Our sin debt crushes the life out of us! Whether our sins are many or few, we lack the capacity to pay the debt; thus our sin produces feelings of guilt, self-loathing, and despair.

What can we do about this? We might think, “I’ll work extra hard and be really, really good from now on.” OK, that might keep from making a bad situation even worse, but it doesn’t solve the problem at hand. Assuming that I quit borrowing money entirely, I’m still in debt up to my ears! It’s the same with a sin debt.

The world says, “Let go of your guilt feelings and hang-ups!” Yes, we could just sear our consciences with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2). It might even make us feel better about ourselves; but denying reality isn’t healthy.

Jesus lovingly invites us to come to Him to find rest from our heavy burden (Matthew 11:28-10). Only Jesus can cancel our sin debt, renew us to the image of God, and give us a healthy self esteem. More on that next time!