Introduction: How important is one’s self-image? It relates to our confidence, happiness, and sense of self-worth. A lot has been said about things like self-love, and self-esteem over the last number of years. Ironically, the more emphasis on “self-love” ad self-esteem, more and more people have a poor self-image. When one becomes a Christian, there should be a change in attitude a person should have about themselves.

**I) The Need For a New Way of Looking at Ourselves**

**A) Low self-esteem is a problem of epidemic proportions.**

1. “Life is one long struggle to think well of ourselves’

2. Millions are unable to “live with themselves’ as they are ridden with fears of insecurity, inferiority, not being accepted, even worthlessness.

a. Depression, suicide, drug abuse are tied in with low self-image.

b. One reason the mantra of “inclusion” is so popular is because many feel excluded.

**B) Low self-esteem multiplies its own agony.**

1. We have all heard the saying, “I don’t think I am inferior; I know I am.”

2. When we are not happy (which means we are probably miserable) we find it hard to be happy with others. Husbands/wives/children/friends, etc.

3. Our frustrations with external circumstances is often the result of frustration with ourselves.

4. Psychiatry offers to solutions, either accept yourself as is or make stronger human efforts to improve yourself.

**II) The Possibility of a New Way of Looking at Ourselves**

**A) How God looks upon the Christian.**

1. “Apparent value” v. “true value”

a. Whatever God’s judgement of a person’s value is based upon “real value” not merely external appearances.

**1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**

b. God objectively sees both strengths and weaknesses, success and failures.

2. God’s concern for the individual.

**Matthew 10:29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.**

3. The individual Christian is important to God.

a. *Because of who he is:* a human being created in the very image of God.

**Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

i. Each person has a unique personality, rational thought, moral qualities, and a spiritual nature.

b. *Because of what he cost*

i. Each Christian has been “purchased” in love by the cost of His own Son’s blood.

**1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

ii. Christ died for all mankind but the Christian has submitted to the righteousness of God and been redeemed.

**Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**

iii. The Christian is special to God, dedicated and set apart from the rest of the world.

**1 Corinthians 6:20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**

iv. In Christ, no person is “inferior” in status before God.

**Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

c. *Because of what he can become*

i. God is concerned not only with what we have been, but what we can become in the future.

**John 8:10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

**B) How the Christian can look at themselves**

1. The questions “What am I?” and “What am I worth?” are nearly impossible to answer in relationship to someone else. The Christian can answer these questions in the context of his/her relationship to God!

2. To think soberly about one’s self and aiming to not over value or under value one’s self.

**Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**

3. The Christian realizes one’s worth is not what one possesses or what one does. **Luke 12.15**

a. Look at Paul’s self-image

**1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

**1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.**

4. Possible misconceptions:

a. Greatness in spiritual matters

**Mark 9:33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. 35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."**

b. Humility does not mean belittling one’s self as an excuse from work. “I can’t” is often a “humble” cover up for “I don’t want to.”

c. Righteousness does not mean that it is impossible to please God. With faith we can do so.

**Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

**Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

d. Confidence is not pride, arrogance, self-righteousness. It is reliance on God.

Conclusion: A good self-image improves our thinking about God and our fellow man .

**Matthew 22:37 Jesus said to him," 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and great commandment. 39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**