

Relationships - Part Two: Respecting Yourself

Last week I started teaching about relationships. I began by teaching about the need to understand yourself.

Before we can be successful in any relationship, including our relationship with God, we must understand ourselves.

- **The prodigal son** was not successful in any of his relationships until, the Bible says, *'he came to himself'* and remembered who he really was.
- **The reason** that most people backslide is because they forget who they really are...that is what happened to the prodigal.
- They become **somebody they are not**.

The first part of understanding yourself is to **remember who you are, where you came from, and what your purpose is**.

- You came from God.
- You are His prized possession.
- You were created for His Glory.
- **You show His Glory** to this world through your testimony.
- **That was all review from last week**.

This Morning I want to talk about - THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF RESPECT!

All healthy relationships begin with self-respect.

If you don't respect and love yourself, you will have a very hard time respecting and loving others.

If you **don't** respect yourself, how can you expect **others** to respect you?

Self-Respect! Jesus said...

Mark 12:30-31 - And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: ***'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*** ***There is no other commandment greater than these.'***

The second greatest commandment in the Bible is a command to love others.

* Notice though, that it has two parts.

1. Love your neighbor.
2. As yourself.

How we love our neighbor is contingent upon how we love ourselves.

- In other words, *if you don't love and respect yourself*, how can you love and respect your neighbor.
- *If your love and respect for yourself is low*, then your love and respect for others will also be low.

That is what the Bible says.... ' As yourself '.

If Jesus wants us to have this great love for others, and He does, then when he said, "As yourself" He also meant we must have a great love and respect for ourselves.

I think you all understand that I am not talking about a worldly self-esteem this morning, but a godly love for yourself.

- You are the prize of His possession!
- I am not talking about thinking that you are 'all that' in this world!
- It is one thing to be arrogant and cocky,
- but it is another thing to be self-confident in who God created you to be.

Jesus said - Matthew 16:24 - ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

We judge ourselves too often in light of the world around us and what this world can offer us.

- **Jesus said** don't look at your life like that, don't compare yourself to this world.
- **Don't** compare yourself to Hollywood.
- **It doesn't matter** if you have all this world can give you if you lose your soul.

Jesus wants you to look at **the real reason** that you are here...we discussed that last week...**to reveal His Glory to this world through your testimony!**

- You have something valuable to offer this world.
- What you have is more precious than silver or gold.
- What you have is something that Hollywood doesn't have.
- Your calling is the highest calling on this Earth.
- It is a calling more important than the president of the United States.

You can begin to **love and respect yourself** when you understand your importance to His Kingdom. ***Can I get a witness?????????***

All our love comes from God, for **God is love**.

The Bible says... **1 John 4:19-21 - ¹⁹We love Him because He first loved us.**

The **first and great commandment is to love God**...and we love him **because He first loved us**.

Let me take this a step further.... **Obedience by Faith -**

²⁰ If someone says, ***"I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar***; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: ***that he who loves God must love his brother also***.

In other words, **you can't love God and hate another**...it is **impossible**. If you do, **the Bible says that you are a flat-out liar**.

If we connect this to **the second commandment**, **we can then say if we don't love ourselves**, we **can't** love others, and **if we cannot love others**, we **cannot love God!**

Loving ourselves is directly connected to loving God! You cannot truly love God if you don't love yourself.

It is important to have love and respect **toward yourself!**

Somebody say, **I love myself**.

We must learn to do that if we want to be **successful in God's Kingdom!**

Paul also understood this concept...

Philippians 4:13 - ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

This was one of the keys to Paul's success.

- He had self-respect.
- He knew who he was.
- He knew where he came from.
- He knew his purpose.

Paul had a positive mental attitude, not in a worldly sense, but ***a godly understanding*** that ***through Christ he could fulfill God's will*** in his life!

Why is it that we don't like ourselves?

- **Personal failures**...we have all messed up.
- **In your past**, you might have been criticized or even abused by others.
- It might be that others are still not accepting you.
- That leads into **a lack of faith in God**.
 - Since others feel that way...**God must also feel that way**.
 - If others don't want to use me...then **God must not want to use me**.

You **can't** afford to lose your faith in God!

If you lose your faith in God...you **can't** please God.

How do we learn to love ourselves?

1. **The first step is to accept God's love**...the Bible says that He first loved us...**we must accept that**.
2. Then we must begin expressing that love toward ourselves and others!
3. We must learn to release ourselves from the past!

How do we do that? This is important!

1. We begin by accepting God's mercy and grace.
2. We accept His forgiveness.

Romans 4:5-8 – ⁵ However, to the one who does not work *but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.*

⁶ David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

Listen, **none of us deserves to be forgiven....** but in his mercy, God chooses to forgive.

God chose to forgive you...can you accept that?

It is a step of faith to accept and believe that God has forgiven you! Paul said that faith is counted for righteousness!

It is too often that we want to have a say in God's forgiving process.

God's grace only works on His terms!

His terms are simple just believe and accept that He has forgiven you!

Your faith in His forgiving power is what makes you righteous!

Somebody needs to hear this today....

- That fact that **you believe that God has forgiven you...is what makes you righteous in God's eyes!**
- The fact that **you believe that God can still use you...is what makes God want to use you!**

We think the Lord is keeping score of our sin, when all the while, **He just wants you to know that you are forgiven of everything in your past!**

Let me read this passage to you from the Message Bible...

Rom 4:3-8 - 3 What we read in Scripture is, "Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and that was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own."

4 If you're a hard worker and do a good job, you deserve your pay; we don't call your wages a gift. 5 But if you see that the job is too big for you, that it's something only God can do, and you trust him to do it — you could never do it for

yourself no matter how hard and long you worked — well, **that trusting-him-to-do-it is what gets you set right with God, by God.** Sheer gift.

6 David confirms this way of looking at it, saying that **the one who trusts God to do the putting-everything-right without insisting on having a say in it is one fortunate man:**

7 Fortunate are those whose crimes are carted off, whose sins are wiped clean from the slate.

8 **Fortunate is the person against whom the Lord does not keep score.**

Blessed is the man ***who can trust that God makes everything right in your life!***

If you believe ***that God has made you righteous, then you are righteous in God's eyes!***

Somebody give the Lord some praise about that!

Some of you think that just because you messed up, God is not going to use you anymore!

I've got **news** for you!

- ***His death*** overcame that obstacle two thousand years ago.
- ***His blood*** has more power than that.
- **The Bible says** that the gifts and the calling of God are **without repentance!**

The devil wants you to think, **your mistakes have put you on the outs with God.**

But my Bible tells me, ***"Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"***

- If you can **accept His forgiveness,** that makes you righteous.
- If you can **have faith in His mercy,** you can make it!
- If you can **grab hold of His grace,** God will use you!

Can I get a witness in the house today?

I must share one story of **Abraham and his wife Sarah** travelling through the kingdom of Abimelech.

Now Abimelech was a real bad dude. He ***didn't believe*** in **the God of Abraham.**

And when **Abraham and his wife came through their city...listen to what happens**, you might remember this story...

Genesis 20:1-2 – Abraham and Abimelech

20 And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. ² Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “**She is my sister.**” And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

How many of you remember this...**Sarah was a beautiful woman**, and when **Abimelech** saw her, **he wanted her**.

- Since he was the king, **he could have whatever he wanted**.
- Abraham was worried that Abimelech would kill him and take his wife, so he lied and said she is my sister...in other words, Abimelech go ahead and take her and have your way with her.

Abraham, the man of God, the father all of Israel, the faithful one, lied.

- **Not only did he lie**, but **he would not stand up and protect his wife**.
- **Not only** is he **a lying dog**, but **he is a coward**.

Now you would think that **God would have withdrawn his blessing** and **his power** from Abraham **for this sin**.

That's what we would do...right?

Listen to what happens... Genesis 20:3 ³ But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “Indeed you *are* a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she *is* a man’s wife.”

Skip down to verse seven.... Genesis 20:7 - ⁷ Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; **for he is a prophet**, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore *her*, know that you shall surely die, you and all who *are* yours.”

Notice what it says. **For he is a prophet**.

It **doesn't say** that **he was a prophet**.

But **Abraham the liar is a prophet**.

Your position with God doesn't change just because you do something wrong.

The difference between church people and God is that **church people throw liars out**, but **God gives them another chance**.

Don't let your failures define you.

- **You do not lose your calling just because you mess up!**
- **You do not lose your status with God just because you make a few mistakes!**
- **You do not become less than what God called you to be when you fail Him!**

Man may make you out to be less than what you were, but not God...the calling is without repentance.

I don't believe that there is anybody in the house today who hasn't messed up since you came to God...if you haven't then you are a liar just like Abraham and the rest of us.

- **For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God!**
- **We are all just a bunch of sinners living under Grace.**

We must believe and accept that God has forgiven us! That is what makes us righteous in His sight!

It is not our righteousness, but His...our righteousness is no better than Abraham's righteousness...Jesus called it filthy rags.

- **If God can forgive a liar like Abraham.**
- **If God can use a murderer like Moses.**
- **If God can forgive an adulterer like David.**

Then God can still forgive you and use you to reveal His Glory to this world.

Listen to what happened...

Genesis 20:17 -

17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.

CLOSE:

God used a liar to heal Abimelech and all his house.

The gifts don't leave you just because you mess up!

- **God wants to restore somebody's faith** today.
- **God is reminding somebody today of their calling.**
- **God has not changed.**
- **He still desires to use you.**

If you will just accept His love.

Accept His forgiveness.

Accept the fact that you cannot change the past.

- The past is past.
- **Forgive those** that you have the power to forgive.
- **Change the things** that you have the power to change.

And leave the rest up to God!

Won't you come and accept His forgiveness today....

- You can be **restored today.**
- You can be **healed today.**
- You can **find the purpose** for **your life today.**