

Managing My Self-Worth

Disclaimer: The following are Dr. Jeff Stott's sermon notes and manuscript. They have not been carefully proofed for spelling or grammar. All Scripture quotes are from the New International Version unless noted.

You are worth more than you realize. You are more important and more significant than you can imagine. I know it is difficult for some people to believe, but God wants us to see ourselves as people of significance, merit, and value; but so many people focus on their faults, weaknesses, and sins. When they make mistakes, they're extremely critical of themselves. They live with the nagging feeling that says, "You're not what you're supposed to be. You don't measure up. You've blown it too many times. You are not worth very much."

The truth of the matter is, you are worth a lot. You have incredible value. Before you were born, God established your true worth by creating you, by choosing you, and ultimately, by dying for you! **Ephesians 1:4** says, "He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." Before you were born God gave you worth and value. No matter what you have done or haven't done, no matter what anyone has said to you or about you, no matter what anyone has done to you God established your worth. Your worth is based on what God says about you, not what others say or how you feel about yourself. Today I want you to think about what God's Word says about your value and worth. I want to give you several Biblical thoughts about self-worth for you to consider.

1. Self-worth is the belief that your life has value and significance.

Number one, self-worth is the belief that your life has value and significance. The word "worth" (axios) in the Bible means "of weight and worth." In Biblical times, gold and other precious metals were placed on a balancing scale upon which their worth was determined by their weight, leading to the expression, "worth their weight in gold" (Lamentations 4:2). So the word "worth" signifies the value, merit, or significance of a person or thing. When we are talking about "self-worth" we are talking about your life having value and significance.

This brings up the question, “How can anyone’s worth be determined?” I think the answer can be found at an auction. At an auction, the worth of an item is determined clearly and simply by one thing – the highest price paid. Each item goes to the highest bidder. You were bought from the auction block of sin over 2,000 years ago when the Heavenly Father paid the highest price possible for you – the life of His Son, Jesus Christ. By that one act, your worth was forever established by God.

Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price for you, willingly dying on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. He loves you that much?

Your true worth is based not on anything you have done or will do, but on what Jesus has already done. Without a doubt, He established your worth – you were worth His life, you were worth dying for. **John 15:13** tells us, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” Your life has value and significance because God gave it value and significance.

2. Your self-worth is based on what God says about you.

A second thought to consider is your self-worth is based on what God says about you. Over and over again God teaches the value of your life.

- In **Matthew 6** Jesus is teaching us not to worry and He points out the Heavenly Father feeds the birds of the air and takes care of them. Jesus says in **verse 6**, “They do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”
- Later in **Matthew 10** Jesus is teaching us not to be afraid of those who can kill or hurt the body. Jesus says that even a sparrow will not die apart from the will of the Heavenly Father. Jesus concludes by saying, “So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (31). You are so valuable that you are not going to die until God is ready for you to die.

- Later in **Matthew 12** Jesus was teaching about ministry on the Sabbath to some Pharisees who had some strange rules about what could be done and not done on the Sabbath. Jesus said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (12). Over and over again through the Bible God is teaching us how valuable we are.

Your sense of value cannot be based on your achievements, how well you perform, how somebody else treats you, or how popular or successful you are. Your sense of value should be based solely on the fact that you are a child of the Most High God. As His unique creation, you have something to offer this world that nobody else has, that nobody else can be.

Some people are always putting themselves down. “I’m so slow,” “I’m so fat,” “I’m so skinny,” “I’m not pretty enough,” “I’m not strong enough,” “I’m not successful enough,” or “I’m not smart enough.” You need to stop doing that. That is unhealthy and that’s exactly what Satan wants you to do. He loves it when you cut yourself down, because it cuts down a creation that God made.

Our value is intrinsic. It is not something you or I have earned, nor can we earn it. God built value into us when He created us. To God, we are His ultimate creations. That means you can stop obsessing about all your faults and give yourself a break. Every person has weaknesses. Even the great men and women of the Bible made mistakes. They all had shortcomings, but that didn’t stop God from loving them, blessing them, and using them to accomplish great deeds. Besides, we need to learn how to keep our flaws in perspective. You may think there is a lot wrong with you, but there is also a lot right with you.

The great news is that God knows everything about you, both good and bad, and He still loves you and values you unconditionally. God does not always approve of your behavior. He is not pleased when we go against His will, and when we do, we always suffer the consequences and have to work with Him to correct our thoughts, words, actions, or attitudes. And while you should work to improve in these areas where you fall short,

nothing you do will ever cause God to love you less... or more. His love is a constant you can depend on. Your value and worth in His eyes does not decrease.

Imagine that I am handing you a new, crisp **one-hundred-dollar bill**. Would you want it? Probably so! Suppose I crumpled it up so it wasn't quite as good-looking as it was the day it came from the mint. Would you still want it? Sure! But wait, what if I took it out in the parking lot, threw it on the ground, and stomped on it until the picture on the bill was barely perceptible? It's now dirty, stained, and soiled. Would you still want it?

Of course. Why? Because it is still valuable despite the rough treatment it has experienced. A hundred dollars is a hundred dollars. It doesn't lose its value simply because it has aged, is not as pretty as it once was, or has taken some bumps and bruises in life.

That's the way God sees each one of us. We all go through challenges and struggles. Sometimes we feel like that hundred-dollar bill, all crumpled and soiled. But just as that hundred-dollar bill still has value, we do too! In fact, we will never, ever lose our value. Our value has been placed in us by the Creator of the universe, and nobody can take it away from us.

3. Satan will try to destroy your self-worth.

Number three, Satan will try to destroy your self-worth. Notice what God says to us in **1 Peter 5:8**, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Satan wants to devour and destroy you. One of the ways he tries to destroy your life is by attacking your self-worth. He will try to give you an inferiority complex. **An inferiority complex is a painful, debilitating feeling of being less valuable than others.** *Inferior* means less valued than others. A *complex* is a group of beliefs that has a powerful influence on your behavior. An inferiority complex is an acute sense of low self-worth, which can produce two very different results:

- *Fearfully timid* attitudes and actions that cause you to easily cave in to others or feel rejected by others. This person says, “I’m nothing... I know I don’t matter.”
- *Overly aggressive* attitudes and actions expressed in an attempt to compensate for feeling rejected. This person says, “Since people hate me, I’ll give them something to hate!” **Psalm 73:21** reflects this by saying, “When my heart was grieved [by a sense of low self-worth] and my spirit embittered [by a sense of low self-worth], I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.”

The enemy does not want you to know who you are in Christ. He doesn’t want you to know that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. He does not want you to know that you are valuable, loved, wanted, and accepted completely by God. Satan will do everything he can to get you to hear his voice saying, “You are not worth anything. No one loves you. No one likes you. Even God does not like you.”

I know my children aren’t perfect. They have faults and weaknesses, and they sometimes make mistakes. But I also know that they’re growing. They’re learning. Imagine you asking me, “Jeff, are you pleased with your children?” How do you think I would answer?

I would not list all their faults. I wouldn’t think about what they have done wrong over their young lives or even what they did wrong this morning. No, without hesitation, I would tell you, “Yes, I am pleased with them. They are great children.” Then I’d tell you everything I like about them. I’d tell you they are loving, caring, attractive, talented. I mean, they’re just like their dad!

Seriously, that’s exactly the way God sees you. He’s not focused on your faults. He’s not keeping a list of your shortcomings. God is not looking at everything you’ve done wrong over your entire life or your disobedience last week. He’s looking at what you’re doing right. He’s looking at the fact that you have made a conscious decision to be better, to live right, and to trust Him. He is pleased that you are kind and courteous to people. He’s looking at the fact that you have a desire to know Him better.

It's time for you to get in agreement with God and start feeling good about who you are. Certainly, you may have some areas in which you need to improve, and you will because you're growing. You're making progress. Don't let Satan devour you by believing his lies that you are not valuable, wanted, loved, and accepted by God.

4. Don't let the past determine your present worth.

Number four, don't let the past determine your present worth. All your life you may have had people tell you, you weren't going to amount to much. You couldn't do this because you were smart enough or you couldn't do that because you weren't pretty enough. Don't let anything anyone said to you in the past determine your present worth.

You may have done some horrible things in the past. You may have hurt people, lied, stolen, cheated, and a bunch of other things but don't let the past determine your present worth. Your value is based on what God says your value is, not on what you say or someone else says it is.

When you became a child of God all things passed away. **2 Corinthians 5:17** says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Don't let the past determine your present worth.

5. Realize how worthy you are (347).

God does not make junk. You are special in God's eyes. He loves you. To help you overcome the inferiority complex the devil would love for you to have, let me give you six truths that will help you realize how W-O-R-T-H-Y you are. You are going to have to fight Satan's attacks on your mind and emotions. He is going to want you to see yourself as worthless, when God has declared you wonderfully made and full of worth. Real quick, let me give you six truths to apply.

Number one, work on eliminating negative attitudes and beliefs. Here is where you say, “I will not hide my feelings or refuse to face them” and “I will not wallow in feelings of self-pity,” and “I will not project my feelings onto others and become critical.” **Philippians 4:8** tells us, “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”

Number two, obtain a scriptural understanding of the love you are to have for yourself. You are not to love yourself with a prideful and conceited love, but to love the truth that God loves you and has a purpose for your life. Love for yourself means seeking God’s highest purpose for your life. Loving others means seeking the highest good for them. We are told in **Galatians 5:14**, “The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Number three, refuse to compare yourself with others. Draw a line in the sand and say, “I will not measure myself by others,” rather “I will thank God for what He has given me and what He is making of me.” **2 Corinthians 10:12** says, “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves.”

Number four, thank God for His unconditional love for you. You are worthy because God says you are worthy, not because you feel worthy or have achieved something you think is significant. You are worthy because God says you are worthy and He loves you. **Psalms 48:9** says, “We meditate on Your unfailing love.” To meditate means to think deeply about. When you understand how much God loves you, you will feel significant.

Number five, hope in God’s promise to mold you to be like Christ. Your spiritual growth is a process and God is committed to your growth. **Romans 8:29** says, “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.”

Number six, yield your talents and abilities to helping others. Decide to be a blessing to others. Allow God to work through you. Get involved in what God is doing in the lives around you. **Galatians 6:2** says to “carry each other’s burdens.” As you submit yourself to serving God by serving others you will sense your sense of worth increasing. Your self-

worth is not based on how much you help others. Your service to others is an overflow of realizing how valuable you are.

Conclusion

You are worth more than you realize. You are more important and more significant than you can imagine. You are so precious and so wonderful Jesus decided you were worth dying for. **John 15:13** says, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Jesus laid His life down for you. He demonstrated how much He loves you and how much He thinks about you. You are valuable to Him. Sometimes you may not feel very valuable or very significant, but in God's heart you are worth your weight in divine gold. If you haven't already I want to encourage you to give your life to Jesus and let Him become your Lord and Savior.