

1. It's Not About Me.

☞ Thinking too Highly About Ourselves

Some ways this is seen:

- Taking credit or glory for what we have done or for who we are
- False humility
- Being overly concerned with what others think of us

Pride loves to climb up, not as Zaccheus to see Christ, but to be seen. WILLIAM GURNALL

The truth of the matter is you and I are more concerned with looking good than actually truly being good. Dave Desforge

For some of us life becomes one long struggle to be what we know all too well we are not. Stanley Voke

- Being overly UNconcerned with what others think of us
- Not giving God the glory that is rightly His
  - Not very grateful - rather entitled (either because we feel like we EARNED it, or because we have some other RIGHT to it)

Prosperity is no friend to a sanctified memory, and therefore we are cautioned, when we are full, lest we forget God. Noah, who had seen the whole world drowned in water, was no sooner safe on shore, and in the enjoyment of plenty, than he forgot God, and drowned himself in wine. - WILLIAM GURNALL

- Being more concerned with how others view US than we are with how we reflect God to them (how much glory God does or does not receive)

As my heart is focused on building my own righteousness, my heart is focused on standing independent of God. What I want is some answer that doesn't require relationship with Him & moment by moment dependence. JOSIAH BANCROFT

☞ Thinking too Little About Ourselves

Some ways this is seen:

- Being unwilling to try things out of fear of failure or feelings of inadequacy...
- Refusing sincere compliments
- Believing Satan's lies that our sin makes us worthless to God or to anyone else...

We need to believe the gospel...

- We are far worse than we even begin to understand...

- God's love for us far stronger than we can even begin to hope for...

It's the righteousness of Christ credited to my account that frees me to be honest about my struggle & to not be crushed by it. (JOSIAH BANCROFT)

I need the righteousness of Christ to make me confident enough to be honest about my sin—so I can make some progress with it. It doesn't crush me. God doesn't abandon me but He moves me forward through it. (JOSIAH BANCROFT)

For every one look at your sin, take ten looks at Jesus! (R. MURRAY MCCHEYNE)

We are not to set the estimates of our power to conquer sin according to past experiences of our will power, but are to fix our attention on Christ and the power of His risen life.... RICHARD LOVELACE)

Walking by the Spirit gives us a whole new attitude toward our sin.... We are able to look at our sin because we are defined by the gospel and not our sin. (JACK MILLER)

☞ Thinking With <sup>(NASB)</sup> Sound Judgment (<sup>NIV & ESV</sup>: Sober Judgment) / NLT: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves.

This means:

- Acknowledging that I am a sinner...
- Acknowledging my worth as a work of God's
- Acknowledging my worth as a redeemed child of God
- Consciously and intentionally refusing to let other's opinions determine my worth.

Two things we each need to pray for in ourselves are: that we would die to what we think about ourselves and that we would die to what others think about us. (Jack Miller)

- Acknowledging that you are TOTALLY dependent upon God
- Acknowledging that God can do far more than we ask or even imagine (Ephesians 3:20) - He is not limited by MY limitations...
- Being willing to go forward in your weakness because your confidence is not in yourself or in your abilities (or lack thereof), but rather in God

When did the disciples ask the Lord to teach them to pray? When they were humbled by their inadequacy in ministry <sup>(STEVE CHILDERS)</sup>

God is a Master Artist. And there are aspects of your life and character—good, quality things—he wants others to notice. So without using blatant tricks or obvious gimmicks, God brings the cool, dark contrast of suffering into your life. That contrast, laid up against the golden character of Christ within you, will draw attention . . . to him. Light against darkness. Beauty against affliction. Joy against sorrow. A sweet, patient spirit against pain and disappointment—major contrasts that have a way of attracting notice. You are the canvas on which he paints glorious truths, sharing beauty, and inspiring others. So that people might see him. <sup>JONI EARECKSON TADA</sup>

Whoever is convicted that Christ is his only righteousness, does not only do his work cheerfully, gladly and well, but also, if necessary, submits to all kinds of burdens and dangers in this life with love because he knows this is God's will, and God is pleased by his obedience. <sup>(MARTIN LUTHER)</sup>

## 2. The Grace Factor (Living by Faith)

☞ By the grace given me...

- Grace requires true humility.

Believers must repent for their being discouraged by their sins. <sup>THOMAS BROOKS</sup>

- Grace is incompatible with a critical spirit

Do not then spend the strength of your zeal for your religion in censuring others. The man that is most busy in censuring others is always least employed in examining himself. - <sup>Thomas Lye</sup>

- Grace enables us to be honest with ourselves without the extremes of either pride or despair.

☞ The faith God has given you...

- Faith is not a matter of how MUCH, but rather of in WHO (or what). - We don't need MORE faith. We need a stronger connection.

If we had "faith as small as a mustard seed, [we could] say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it [would] move (Mat. 17:20 <sup>NIV84</sup>)

Faith does nothing alone—nothing of itself, but everything under God, by God, through God. <sup>WILLIAM STOUGHTON</sup>

- Faith is a conduit that enables weak and dependent creatures to accomplish things far beyond their own natural ability.

To live by faith is "to believe that [we can] do things through Him that [we] could never do on [our] own. <sup>STEVE CHILDERS</sup>

Real true faith is man's weakness leaning on God's strength. <sup>D. L. MOODY</sup>

- Faith enables us to experience joy in the midst of painful hardships & unanswerable questions.

A Child of God should be a visible beatitude for joy and happiness, and a living doxology for gratitude and adoration. <sup>CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON</sup>

Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you cannot understand at the time. <sup>OSWALD CHAMBERS</sup>

Faith knows itself to be weak and uncertain, and yet, like the reed it will survive the storm better than the proud oak. It knows that in this world it can never penetrate all the unfathomable mysteries of God, and yet, however tiny the light it receives from him, this is the only light that can really show it the way. <sup>PAUL TOURNIER</sup>

A healthy Christian self-esteem / self-image is bound up, by faith, in who we are in Christ by His amazing & boundless grace. It does not need the accolades of others, only the assurance that we are, indeed, sons & daughters of God & co-heirs with Christ. When we understand this we can be brutally honest with ourselves & still be full of joy and peace, even in the midst of painful circumstances & unanswerable questions. We can try things we feel inadequate for without fear of failing, because our own success or failure does not define us.

My paraphrase of Romans 12:3: Don't flatter yourself. On the other hand, don't beat yourself up. Remember that it's not about you & rejoice that God gives you the privilege & the opportunity to make an eternal difference on other people's lives by His grace through faith in Him.

A Truth to Remember: In Jesus Christ we are children of God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. In and of ourselves we are nothing.

A Challenge to Consider: Are you willing to attempt something for God that YOU cannot do, even if it means that you might well fail, if He should so choose?

One thing I heard this morning was...

One way I heard the gospel this morning was...