

~Epilogue~

You can Love Yourself Because God First Loved You

I grew up in a family where love was conditional. If I acted perfectly, then I would be “loved”. However if I was not perfect, love would be withheld from me. I got to a point in my life when I just gave up trying to be what everyone wanted me to be. This was because I could never meet their expectations to be loved. I thought I was just unlovable. I remember feeling I was not even worth receiving a cupcake at the 6th grade party. Pretty sad, isn’t it. However we can all relate one way or another, because of the conditional and selfish love that we are bombarded with throughout our lives and that we sometimes give to others.

You know God wants you to love others, but He also wants you to love yourself. I would guess some of you are thinking, “Nowhere in scripture, does God tell us to specifically love ourselves”. You are right! The only scripture that comes close to telling us to love our self is in Mark 12:31 ...*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* (This same theme is in other similar verses, such as Leviticus 19:18.) Yet, it is so clear God loves you and me! It is also true we are cherished and ever so valuable to Him. So why shouldn’t God want us to love ourselves from His perspective?

I believe why scripture doesn’t tell us specifically to love ourselves is because we tend to love ourselves already. Yet, the problem is, we don’t love ourselves with God’s kind of love, but instead with love that can be very conditional, unforgiving, and have no mercy or grace to it – the same kind of love we tend to love others with. We also need to be very careful because love for ourselves can end up making us selfish. Self-centeredness is sin!

So how should you love yourself from God’s viewpoint? You love yourself by thinking of yourself as God thinks of you, as loved and valued. I am going to give you nine principles on how God loves and values you. A lot of what is covered in these principles will be a review from this study. This review will give you a concise, and hopefully, a meaningful list you can go over when you feel unloved by God. There is no homework, but some thought provoking questions I deeply hope you will take to heart! I trust this review will make you want to simply love God and yourself because He first loved you!

1. Ephesians 1:4 says, God's love for you started in eternity, so you have never been unloved by God! Since God has always loved you, shouldn't you love yourself?

...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world ...In love... (NASB)

2. God created you to love you! Since God delights in you because He loves you, can't you delight in how He created you?

The Lord your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. Zephaniah 3:17 (NASB)

3. God created you to be exactly what He wanted you to be! Remember in Genesis 1 God calls you very good, which means, you are beautiful to Him. Since you are beautiful to Him, shouldn't you think of yourself as His beautiful and loved woman?
4. God's love for you is relentless. It started in eternity past. He even died for you to show His undying love for you. Won't you allow His relentless love for you to transform your thoughts about yourself? In Jeremiah 31:3 God says,

...I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness (NASB)

5. Before you were a Christian, you were a criminal towards God deserving His wrath and punishment for each and every sin. Yet, God loved you and forgave you for all your sinful acts against Him, by taking the punishment upon Himself. Shouldn't you think of yourself as abundantly loved by God, because He put no conditions or expectations on you to be loved and forgiven?

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (NASB)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ... Ephesians 2:4-5 (NASB)

6. You know how valuable someone is to a person by how much that person is willing to give or give up for that someone. Since God gave up His Only Son for you, should you not think and act like you are worth loving? Paul said in Romans 8:31-32,

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? (NASB)

7. When Jesus was dying an agonizing death for you, you were in His thoughts. The joy of a relationship with you was what made Him endure the torture of a cross. Since Jesus loves you so much, shouldn't you feel loved? Hebrews 12:2b says,

...who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (NASB)

8. God wants to be in a very intimate relationship with you. So God, in His great love for you, has been waiting to literally fill you with His love. He does this by causing His Spirit to indwell you instantaneously when you believe in Him. You can't get any more intimate than that with someone you love. God loves you so can't you take a chance and love yourself the way He loves you?

By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10 (NASB)

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:5 (NASB)

9. God redeemed or bought you out of slavery to sin by His crucifixion. This was so you could become His beloved daughter and become an heir to His eternal estate. Since you are His daughter, you are a princess of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Because of this fact, shouldn't you realize how special you are to Him, and stop putting yourself down? Shouldn't you think and act like a daughter of a King?

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons (daughters) by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ... Romans 8:15-17 (NASB)

It is with a few regrets that I end this study on God's love. This is because there is more that could be said. His love for us is a romance that is eternal so it never ends. And how do I or anyone sufficiently cover that type of love story!

Maybe God will allow me to do some updates on His romance in eternity, when I will know the rest of the story?

I do end this study with some unused insights which made it hard to end too. However, eight lessons and an epilogue are plenty for all of you to prayerfully deal with anyway.

I want to thank all of you who took the time and effort to read and study the insights God gave me through His Word about love. You are truly women (and I hear some men braved my female ramblings) who must have the patience of Job and his love for God to have endured through this study. I count myself a teacher not a writer, so I am sure it sometimes took some rereading and guessing to understand the point I was trying to make. Praise the Lord for my editors...

The Bible passage that keeps going through my heart to end with is Ephesians 3:16-21. When you read it you will understand why our God and Savior wanted me to end this way! To Him be the Glory!!!

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.
Ephesians 3:16-21 (NLT)

Because of His love for you and me, Love you! Gini

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