

Self Love

The world seeks unceasingly to convince man that he needs more self-love and self esteem. It claims that the problems of the world, and one's lack of success in it, stem largely from a lack of these "attributes." Courses are given to strengthen self-esteem. It has become a credo of education and modern psychology. Commercials are ever hawking the mantras of "you owe it to yourself" or "you deserve this or that." After a while, all of this becomes quite convincing if one doesn't have sufficiency of knowledge of God's Word and His love in ones heart to resist this most persuasive temptation. The obvious danger here is that the pursuit of an increase in self-love can, and inevitably will easily lead to pride, envy, covetousness, greed and other forms of selfness, which is radically contrary to biblical teaching.

Much of this perceived need for additional self-love seems to have gained momentum about 50 years ago in what might be called the study halls of psychology. Some credit an Erick Fromm, a blatantly anti-Christian humanist psychologist, for this modern emphasis on self-love. He expounded on man's innate goodness, which, of course, is wholly contrary to Scripture (See Jeremiah 17:9). He seems to have sought to apply Matthew 19:19, which says that "thou shall love your neighbor as yourself." To support this false thesis, that because we are all inherently good, we must naturally esteem and love ourselves first before we can love others, and that most of us don't appreciate or love ourselves enough. Therefore, self-love must be taught, nurtured and encouraged as a prerequisite to any progress in relationship with others. This nugget of man's human wisdom, so contrary to God's wisdom, is now one of the cornerstones of modern psychology, even so-called Christian Psychology that isn't Christianity at all; its roots are 100% secular and have no basis in Scripture. Fromm was correct in his premise that there is not enough love in the world. However, because he could only apply a human wisdom to the problem, he naturally arrived at a humanistic conclusion, and one contrary to the wisdom of God, for "has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1Corinthians

1:2). What is so sorely lacking is NOT love of ones self, but the love of God and of others!

The Humanist Manifesto 1 declares “*Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.*” This of course is Godless selfism. We could call it the religion of selfism. It is nothing new, because it started in Eden when Satan turned Eve away from obedience to God, toward her own interests, even to achieving godhood. Today it is being advanced by the godless New Age movement and will culminate in the man who is coming, Satan’s son, whom we call the Antichrist. What religions are there, except Christianity, which don’t look to self in order to obtain some form of self-styled “salvation”? They rely, at least in part, on their own efforts, such as sacraments, mediation, rituals, sacrifices and good works. It’s no wonder that this preoccupation with love of self is so attractive and convincing as “the way to go.” The problem, however, is that the way to go, will take them to where they wish they weren’t!

These psychological constructs of selfism self-esteem, self-love, self-image and self-actualization are predicated upon the assumption that man is innately good by nature, a premise totally contrary to Scripture, God’s inerrant Word. The strategy and goal of this whole movement can be nothing more than Satan’s way of conditioning and preparing man for his brief end time rule of the earth. A study of the Book of Revelation can help make this very clear.

Nowhere do the Scriptures tell us we have insufficient self-love. If we inherently lack sufficient love, would Jesus command us to love our neighbors as ourselves, if we don’t already love our selves enough? Nowhere does it say that we are to first see a psychologist or some other self-love instructing guru to prod us into a greater love for ourselves. Surely, we must already love ourselves enough or His command would be foolish. This is evident from Ephesians 5:29, which tells us empathically that “no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it....” Humanist psychology recognizes that guilt is a major factor troubling man. It therefore seeks to eliminate guilt

through various palliatives, such as more self-love, never admitting that guilt is rooted in sin, and that it is sin, which must be removed before guilt will go away. Because the humanists avoid the concept of sin, they can never “cure “ the patient any more than the surgeon can “cure” a cancerous body by cutting out the cancer, while denying and not addressing its underlying cause.

Again it is love for God and for others, which is severely lacking in the world, not self-love. And this love only comes from God himself, for Scripture tells us that we love Him because He first loved us. This means that our capacity to love as God loves is possible only when God’s love is in us. This kind of love can only be found in the true born-again Christian, because only he or she has the true love for the true one and only God, Christ Jesus, the God of the Holy Bible, for there is no other god or other genuine love. But how do we deal with the Scripture verses such as Ephesians 5:28 which say that “men ought to love their wives as their own bodies,” and “He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it even as the Lord loves the church”? Here Paul is using an analogy to describe the importance and magnitude of what a man’s love for his wife and others should be. In order to understand this, we must examine it in the context of the whole Scripture. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that “Mankind is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it”? With such a heart no one can have or reflect God’s genuine love. However, the born-again Christian with his or her new heart can have this love, and should have as the order of priority, to love God first, all others second and self third. That means that when we can, we are to always subordinate ourselves for others. We are called to humbleness, to lowliness, to meekness, to humility (Colossians 3:12). This is hardly a call to any increase in self-love. Remember that the scriptural meaning of meekness is not a form of weakness. It is simply the power of the Holy Spirit in us keeping the self under control. The world would have us have self-esteem or self-adulation rather than meekness. Humbleness is not having a poor, but a proper estimate of oneself. The world would have us proud of self and teaches that pride is essential to a successful life. But the Holy Spirit in Philippians 2:3 tells us to “let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

In Luke 14:26 Jesus Himself says, “...if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, yea and his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” Hate here is not what we normally mean by that word, but instead it is to “set aside, reject or discount.” Here Jesus is speaking of priorities, that is Who must be first on our love list.

We are to maintain self-love only to the extent it is necessary for the taking of reasonable and appropriate care of our bodies and for the future of our immortal souls. This is the sole purpose and extent to which we are to self-love. This self-love of our bodies is a fleshly love. As Christians, the love we are to offer to our wives, as well as our Christian brothers and sisters is a spiritual, God centered love, which is also a sacrificial love. Thus, we are commanded to two kinds of love, that is, our natural and limited self-love, and also Christ’s kind of love whereby He gave His life for His bride, the church.

Of course, one must love one’s wife as one’s own body, because even back in Genesis 2:23 God tells us that man and wife “shall be one flesh.” The one flesh in the Christian sense surely must love its combined self as it does its individual self. When Scripture tells us to love others as one loves oneself, it means that one is never to do less, or treat others with any less love and respect than one would have for one’s self. In fact, as noted, Scripture calls us to a higher standard when dealing with others.

God’s commandment to love must be acted upon as a commitment, not an emotion. It is a decision, a resolve to obedience to His Word, to His sound irrefutable doctrine. This must become our very life, for it validates the assurance of our eternal life. Lacking this, we are in great danger of deluding ourselves and to be practicing a false Christianity.

Now if there is any doubt as to the source of this apostasy regarding the need for more self-love, consider 2Timothy 3:1-3. “This we know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For man shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient—without natural affections” How prophetic this is! How

appropriate that it's in these end times that the preaching of self-love should so universally manifest! Notice that the lovers of their own selves is the first on the list and is probably listed that way because as stated earlier, it is the precursor to the rest of the list of sins. Consider each one. Isn't it evident that covetousness, boasting, pride, etc. really emanates from selfishness which is nothing more than too much self-love? It is quite difficult to boast and have pride if you are truly meek and humble and fully recognize who Scripture says you really are!

Those who know even a little of the Scripture, realize that we are in those "last days." As noted above, the world is conditioning everyone to be "lovers of their own selves" just as the Holy Spirit through Paul here tells us. Through psychology, even Christian psychology, and even through some speaking from the pulpit, many have been duped into believing that we need more self-love. Those who have an ear let them hear what the Holy Spirit has said.