

“In the Heart of the Community with the Community at Heart”



September 2011



The Biblical Counselor's Corner

"Who Do You Think You Are?"

The Biblical View of One's Self and So-Called Self-Esteem

Our church family is moving through Romans on Sunday morning. We have completed Paul's eleven chapters of doctrine which have laid the foundation and provided the launching pad for the final five chapters of practical application for daily living. We have been transformed by powerful truths and guidelines for living in chapter 12:

1. In 12:1 it is plural "you brethren," plural "your bodies," but singular "sacrifice" presented to God. This points out that Paul was addressing the entire local congregation regarding offering itself as a corporate body to God as a singular "group" sacrifice! We often individualize this "body sacrifice" to make it more personal than the text intends.
2. This fits the remaining context and message of Romans 12:2 to the end of the letter: **focus on and service to God, Christ, and others, not focus on self.** The Christian lifestyle must follow Jesus' example of self-denial and self-sacrifice to obey God and serve others. (Philippians 2) Three different words for "service" are used in Romans 12:1, 7, 11.
3. In 12:2-3, this involves not being conformed to the world's preoccupation with self, needs, and rights. Christians are to be transformed in their thinking about themselves; biblically measuring themselves against God's standards in His Word, not measuring themselves against others, which is what the world does and calls it "self-esteem." See Luke 18:9-14.
4. A truly biblical Christian lives to please and serve God, Christ, and others, especially others in his own local church. Romans 12:4-13 emphasizes self-denial in using spiritual gifts to serve others in humility and love in his own church.

Although the Bible teaches that we should focus much more on God, Christ, and others, it is also important that we have an accurate understanding of who we are. A verse that commands us to have that understanding is Romans 12:3, *"Through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself that he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."*

The two commands in this verse can be literally translated, *"Do not be high-minded above that which you ought to be minded, but be so minded as to be sober-minded."* This literal translation is very helpful in two ways. First it eliminates the impression given by the English text that it is okay to think highly of ourselves as long as we do not think too highly of ourselves (this is highly unbiblical and ungodly and opposed to all the Bible teaches). Second it reveals the emphasis in the verse on our thinking, for forms of the Greek verb *"phroneo, 'to think'"* are used four times in this single verse. In fact, the verse could also be translated, *"Do not think highly above what you ought to think, but think right thinking about yourself."* God doesn't mind if we think about ourselves, just as long as we are thinking biblically, not worldly! Romans 12:2 has already stated such. So the question "Who do you think you are?" is an important one if we are to fully obey the two commands in Romans 12:3.

Let's tackle the issue by dividing it into two elements: 1. The Command for A Christ-like Humility and, 2. The Command for A Biblical Doctrine of Who Man Is (Biblical Anthropology).

Let's begin with God's command for a Christ-like humility. Paul basically says, "Do not think too highly of yourself." In other words, "Who do you think you are?!" Two important considerations made this command necessary in Paul's day and equally necessary in our own day:

- a. Man's Natural Propensity for Self-Love, and
- b. God's Precept of Self-Denial.

First of all, because of sin, man naturally thinks too highly of himself. Paul does not mention the possibility of thinking too lowly of ourselves because he knows our tendency is always to esteem and promote ourselves more than we should. Scripture never commands us to think more highly of ourselves, to like ourselves more, to love ourselves more, or to forgive ourselves. You will not find one single such command in your Bible. Then why are we taught to have "high self-esteem?" Aha! Romans 12:2-3 says it is a "conforming-transforming" issue. It is a sinful, self-centered unbelieving world that teaches its own to "love themselves" and "esteem themselves." The dark, God-hating world system says "Man's greatest problem is that he doesn't love himself!" The world says men commit evil deeds against others because they don't "love themselves enough." The world says all the ills that befall man are the fault of low self-esteem.

When will the Church stop being deceived by one who disguises himself as an angel of light? (2 Corinthians 11:14) Paul told the Romans to be transformed in their thinking; to think of themselves biblically, not as the world thinks of itself. The Bible says the exact opposite of the world about "the self" and what we are to think about ourselves. The Bible says men commit evil acts against one another because they naturally love evil and darkness (John 3:19). The Bible says the source of evil deeds in the world is man's own sinful propensity within his heart, mind, and desires (Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21). **The Bible says the problem with the world today is HIGH self-esteem, not low self-esteem.** Sinful men naturally think too highly of themselves, and do not care about or consider others, and so they commit evil acts against them. How foolish to say, "A man commits murder because he has low self-esteem and does not respect himself or think highly enough about himself." The Bible says a man commits murder because his heart is dark and sinful and he does not love his fellow man; he cares only about himself. 2 Timothy 3:1-2 says as the end of time approaches, men will become only more self-centered and unloving toward others. Jesus said in Matthew 22 that if each of us would love others as much as we naturally love ourselves, the Law of God would be fulfilled! Paul told the Ephesians that "no one ever hated his own body, but he nourishes it and cherishes it." No, my friends, a man does not murder because he thinks too lowly of himself, but because he thinks too highly of himself, and not highly enough of God, Christ, and others.

The idea of self-esteem did not originate in the Bible, but from sinful human wisdom in humanistic, secular psychology (1 Corinthians 2; Colossians 2:8). The sinful human heart rejects God's commands and must create its own system to justify and heal itself apart from God. If God has said the human heart is sinful, the sinful human heart says "I am good." Unfortunately many in the Church have been deceived and promote an unbiblical thinking about the self. Robert Schuller said in *"Self-Esteem: The New Reformation,"* "Classical theology has erred in its insistence that theology be God-centered, not man-centered. Reformation theology failed to make clear that the core of sin is a lack of self-esteem. By nature we are not bad...label it a negative self-image but do not say that the central core of the human soul is wickedness." With this kind of teaching, salvation from sin and hell in Christ is impossible because there is no need for it! James Dobson said in *"What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Them,"* "No doubt the greatest need for the women of the world is a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth. The health of an entire society depends on the ease with which its individual members can gain personal acceptance. Whenever the keys to self-esteem are out of reach, social disorder will certainly occur."

We must not allow our minds to conform to this kind of worldly self-thinking, but we must continually be transformed and renewed in our thinking about ourselves as defined in God's Holy Word the Bible. This kind of thinking about self opposes what the Bible says about Jesus first, others second, and self last. "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many." Philippians 2: *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

So brothers and sisters in Christ, here we see truly LOWLY self-esteem, and it is truly biblical and genuinely pleasing to God and commanded to be imitated. May God help us to fight the good fight and to think of ourselves in a way that is pleasing to Him.



11005 Foster Rd.
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www.gracelive.com

Join us for our...

100 Years Celebration

September 18, 2011

9:30am - Welcome Reception

10:45am - Worship Service

1:30pm - Picnic at

La Mirada Regional Park

Let's celebrate God's faithfulness!

SEPTEMBER 2011 MONTHLY EVENT CALENDAR

The ROCK

Raising Our Children
for the King -

Children's Ministries on
Wednesday evenings at

6:30 pm -

Kidmo room

Join us for an amazing year
of missions.

College/Young Adult

Small Group

See Tim Lansing for details

DRIVEN NEWS

Our DRIVEN youth
ministries meet Wednesday
evenings at 6:30 pm in the
Fellowship
Hall. All youth are
welcome to attend.

Please see the DRIVEN
page for more details.

MOMENTUM

2012

Kentucky

CHILDREN'S CHOIR -
Parent Mtg. - Sept. 25th
at 12:15pm

WOMEN OF GRACE

Join the Women of Grace for
their new year starting
September 13 at 6:30pm.
More details to follow.

Ladies Ministries

Sept. 24, 2011 - 5pm
Devotional, Game, & Taco Salad

Oct. 8, 2011 - 5pm
Ladies Gala \$12.00

MISSION NEWS...

already mentioned in the Brethren Missionary Herald magazine as early as 1939. ☺

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From *PATTY'S EMAIL*

WAYNE & ELLEN PATTON BRAZIL MINISTRY UPDATE

Ellen has cataract surgery scheduled for the 17th of August.

This is a complex month traveling. Pray for cars, open homes and volunteers to help get us around.

Pray for our plans for travel in September – December 2011.

Pray for Jacob's marriage and new adventure in life starting August 13.

Pray for Caleb as he adjusts to a new life in the States.

For Josiah to meet new friends and get his school work completed well.

Back at Cotijuba:

Pray for help in developing a good design for our port area. .

Pray for Nazerano and Ionie as they consider future ministry on the island of Cotijuba .

Pray for the story cloth as we are still working on it.

Pray that a tower and well can be dug to provide good water for the Johnson Family.

(The Pattons will be here with us on Nov. 6.)

From *PATTON'S EMAIL*

PATTY MORRIS FRANCE MINISTRY UPDATE

I hope you are all enjoying your summer. Please give greetings to the rest of the congregation. As I have already told Jeff and Lisa, it would be very nice to be able to celebrate the church's 100th anniversary with you but the commute is a bit much! I went on the Brethren digital archives and found several articles, including the Silver anniversary celebration. It was interesting to note that the Adams, Soverns and Runyon families were

CECIL & DEBBIE O'DELL TOKYO MINISTRY UPDATE

NEW STUDENTS ARRIVING IN AUGUST



Every August gives us the opportunity to meet newly arriving students from Japan on our local college campuses. We are looking forward to all the new relationships God has in store for us as we attend new student orientations and invite them to the conversation lab at the campus learning center where we volunteer.

Please pray for us as we develop new relationships and share the gospel with each of these new contacts.

Please pray for John Ortega who is one of our student missionaries at the Long Beach City College campus.

From *O'DELL'S EMAIL*



Fall KICKOFF

If you're in Junior High or High School make plans to join us on **Wednesday, September 14th** as we kickoff a brand new year together!

EVENTS

WORSHIP

OUTREACH

GOD'S WORD

RETREATS

Fundraisers

Check us out as we introduce a **New Theme, Fresh Challenges & In-depth Training** into God's Word. **BE HERE FOR DRIVEN WEDNESDAYS!**

We had over 40 people show up for our "Shave-It Fundraiser" in August. A BIG Thank You for your support of the DRIVEN Youth Group!



Converge (Come Together) with your peers @ your school flag pole on 9.28.11 an hour before school starts and pray to God for your school, friends, family, nation & church. Will you accept the challenge??

Month @ a Glance

DRIVEN WEDNESDAY

6:30p - 8:00p

Every Wednesday Night

STARTING - September 14th.

DRIVEN Work Day @ GRACE

8:00a - 12:00p

Saturday, September 17th

GRACE - 100 Yr Celebration

9:30a - 4:00p

Sunday, September 18th

"WE CARE" Outreach

6:30p - 8:00p

Wednesday, September 21st

SEE YOU AT THE POLE

7:00a @ Your School

Wednesday, September 28th

CRAZY DRIVEN (Bring a Friend)

6:30p - 8:00p

Wednesday, September 28th



With summer just ending, it's not too early to begin thinking about plans for next summer! Consider joining Operation Barnabas 2012 as your Summer Missions Training Program. If God is placing a desire on your heart to lead your peers spiritually and to go deeper with HIM, see Timothy Lansing for an OB application package.

SEPTEMBER 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				01 Patty Morales	02	03 Christy Randolph Joanna Selmanson Glenn Wilson
04 5:00p Worship Commission	05 LABOR DAY	06 Nancy Schlatter	07 FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	08	09 Jesse Hurtado	10 8:00a-noon WORK DAY
11 Amanda Predmore Vet & Jennifer Gonzalez 3:30p Care Comm. 5:00p CE & Fellowship Comm. 7:00p Deacon Board	12	13 6:30p Women of Grace	14 Kelly & Tatum Smith FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p DRIVEN/ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	15 Marlene Chambers	16	17 Cesar Barragan 8:00a-noon WORK DAY & DRIVEN WORKDAY
18 Habib Issa 100 YEARS CELEBRATION 9:30a Reception 10:45a Worship 1:30p Picnic at La Mirada Regional Park NO PM SERVICE	19	20 7:00p Elder Board 7:00p Ladies' Discipleship	21 6:30p WE CARE Ice Cream Social – Morales' yard 8:00p Worship Team	22 Pauline Issa	23 Gavin DeLuna 10:00a Missions/ Evangelism Comm. 7-10:00p Biblical Counseling Training	24 5:00p Ladies' Night Out 8:30a-5:30p Biblical Counseling Training
25 12:15p Children's Choir – Parent Mtg.	26 Eddie & Patty Morales	27 Robert & Laura Kimsey	28 George Miller 7a See you at the pole FAMILY NIGHT: 6:30p crazy DRIVEN/ ROCK & ABS 8:00p Worship Team	29	30 Irene Yrineo	Oct. 1 10:00a Women of Grace Rally – here at Norwalk GBC