

Cell Material Week beginning 3rd July 2007

Self-esteem and our right standing before God

Welcome

Is there anything about yourself you would like to change? (Something related to looks, character, circumstances etc)

Word

Would anyone like to share whether they feel they have a good or a bad self-image? Have you ever displayed any of the behaviours listed on the separate sheet? What do you think has contributed to the way you see yourself?

Read Romans 9 vs 20 and 21. Do you ever blame God for the way he made you or the circumstances of your life? Why do you think this is?

Read Ephesians 2 vs 10. What do you think God has called you to do? What gifts can you offer back to God?

Read Romans 8 vs 1-17. In this passage we learn that we are to be controlled by the spirit. How can we allow the Holy Spirit to control us in our every day lives? What positive things does this passage tell us in vs 15-17? How does God see us? How should we view ourselves in the light of this? How should we view others in the light of this?

Worship

Spend some time thanking God for how he made you. If your cell know each other well enough you may want to play this game – on a strip of paper each person is to write their name at the bottom. They then pass the strip to the left – that person writes a positive thing about the named person at the top of the paper and folds it over. Continue passing the paper to the left and each person is to write a positive comment about everyone else. Once the paper gets back to the original sender they should be able to unfold the strip and read a list of good things about themselves. By doing this you may discover good qualities you didn't realise you had! Play some quiet music and spend a few moments meditating on how wonderfully you have been made and how much God loves you. You may like to have Psalm 139 open to read quietly to yourself as the music plays and turn this into a personal prayer. (If you don't feel the first activity is appropriate for your group just use Psalm 139 for quiet reflection.) Pray for any cell members who feel they need to be set free from anything negative that affects their self-esteem.

Witness

This week try to quietly observe people you meet – at home, at work, at school, in the street, on the roads, in the shops, in cell and at church. Become aware of their behaviours and try to imagine why they may be behaving as they do especially if their behaviour irritates or annoys you. Ask God to give you tolerance and patience for these people and pray for them – that they will become aware of how much God loves them and how special they are to him. Pray that God will give you opportunities this week to share God's love with others by encouraging and building them up and boosting their self-esteem.

Some of the consequences of low self esteem:

- ❖ Comparing yourself unfavourably to others – lead to misery and feelings of inadequacy. This can lead to people thinking they can't do anything, as they wouldn't be as good as someone else.
- ❖ Acting tough to try to cover up true feelings of inadequacy.
- ❖ Going into debt to buy things you think will impress others or to keep up with others.
- ❖ Low self-confidence.
- ❖ Trying to be different things to different people – wearing masks and not really knowing the real you.
- ❖ Being unable to set consistent boundaries in your life for yourself – that can result in substance abuse, gluttony, alcoholism, promiscuity, addictions and overwork.
- ❖ Being unable to set consistent boundaries in your life for others – including your children - that can result in allowing others to walk all over you, saying yes when you want to say no, people having no respect for you.
- ❖ Social withdrawal.
- ❖ A need to have approval of others – sometimes allowing others to control you.
- ❖ Negative feelings of guilt, shame and fear.
- ❖ Having to present a perfect image to the world as far as your looks are concerned to cover up what's hurting inside, or the other extreme not caring about your body or your appearance at all.
- ❖ And the opposite of that – becoming an extreme extrovert in an attempt to be noticed.
- ❖ Jealousy and criticism of others.
- ❖ Self-criticism, self-hatred and an inability to accept compliments or expressions of love.
- ❖ A tendency to be complaining, argumentative, intolerant, hypersensitive and unforgiving.
- ❖ An inclination to be a poor loser.
- ❖ An inclination to be a poor listener and not really be interested in the needs of others.
- ❖ Depression.