

NOTE: Need pamphlet *Who I Am In Christ

PRIDE

1. We have already implied how pride can co-exist with low self-esteem. In our minds we create a person who is wonderful to cover up the person we truly feel we are. The prideful person may go out and accomplish much to sustain this self-image.
2. In much of the superficiality of the addict's life, we see the workings of pride - trying to cover up deep feelings of inadequacy with having the best clothes, the best furniture, being the most fun at every party. It can be downright pitiful.
3. We do have great value, but, before we can know our true value, we must let go of these other things on which we are trying to base our value. In truth, our value lies in the fact that we were created by God the Father to be objects of His love, that His Son loved us so much He died to break down the wall of sin that separated us from the Father, that He wants to dwell with us eternally. You know all of this, so why do you hold onto those other things? It is because what other people think about you means more than this. Sure, I know all these things, but please let just one flesh and blood person show me that they value me.
4. Why do we feel this way? The answer is fairly simple. God is remote for most of us; man is right here. It was a person who did not value me, and now it is only a person who can give me value.
5. Can you hold onto getting your sense of worth from others and start getting it from God at the same time? I think not. In Galatians 1:10, we read:

Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.
6. We need to let go—as much as possible—of those things of the world that give us worth -whether it is worth in our eyes or in how we believe others see us. Does that mean giving up your successful job? Probably not. But we have to offer them to the Lord, and let Him determine whether or not we need to let go of these things physically.
7. Only when we let go of these things can we see how foolish they were.
8. I want you to picture yourself standing before Jesus. If you are a woman, maybe you are in a plain dreary cotton dress; if you are man, maybe you are naked, and your body is fairly unattractive, a bit flabby. You have no possessions, you have no accomplishments to point to; you have no special gifts or talents worth mentioning. There is just you. Now look into Jesus's

eyes. What do you see? What do you hear him saying to you. Does He love you any less because you have nothing to commend yourself—nothing to offer Him but your naked self? Of course not, He loves you for you, not for any filthy rags you have managed to accumulate. This is truth. Hold onto this picture.

9. Listen to two of the beatitudes:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:3)

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5)

The poor in spirit are those who know their neediness. The meek are those who are the opposite of the proud. What glorious gifts await them— heaven and earth. What else is there?

10. Our faith is filled with paradoxes. This is one of them. To have true worth, we have to let go of everything that has given us worth—save Jesus Christ.
11. Pride in most people coming out of addictions is a means of covering up a deep sense of worthlessness—a misguided effort to feel good about ourselves based on what we have or what we have done or based on how we think others see us. If it works, we are in terrible trouble because we can be cut off from God; we don't recognize that we truly need Him. Most often it won't work, and we just go on striving and striving and seeking men's approval.

Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you. (John 6:27)

CRITICAL SPIRIT

1. This is the defensive system in which we try to compensate for our own terrible feelings about ourselves by trying to pull others down. As we are critical of others, we somehow make ourselves feel superior. It is very common among people overcoming addictions, and it is very subtle. We seldom are aware that we are doing it.
2. Where does the Bible say anything about a critical spirit? It doesn't, but it uses another word—judging. Our tendency to constantly judge other people is evidence of a critical spirit.
3. The scripture about not judging lest we be judged has been so misused that we need to say a word about judging. Nowhere does the Bible say that we should not call sin, sin. Particularly in the Body of Christ, if a brother is in sin, that needs to be pointed out to him. When the Bible says

we should not judge, it is talking about our judging the person--his character, his motives, his worth--not specific actions.

4. A critical spirit ties in closely with pride. We exalt ourselves by giving ourselves the right to judge others. In religion, this is Pharisaism.
5. There are several real dangers in having a critical spirit:
 - a. When we move from judging behavior to judging people, we move into God's position. That's serious sin.
 - b. Second, we are promised that we will be judged by God with the same standards by which we judged others:

Judge not, that you be not judged For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. (Matt. 7:1-2)
 - c. Third, I have found that the reversal of this is true also; I judge myself by the same standards by which I judge others. My self-condemnation seems to relate directly to what I am criticizing in other people. When I ease up and lay off others, I let up on myself
6. Another interesting thing about a critical spirit, something it can be helpful to recognize, is that we tend to be most critical about those things in another person that we most hate about ourselves.
7. The critical spirit is not necessarily a spirit in the demonic sense, but is an attitude of the heart, a way of responding to the world around us that has become deeply imbedded into us.
8. It is extremely hard to overcome, but again, it is a part of the healing process. We will be getting into repentance more directly in a few weeks, but let me suggest how it can be dealt with:
 - a. Recognize it, if you have it.
 - b. Obviously, repent if you do. (Over and over again)
 - c. Then start praying for those you are critical of
 - d. Try to become their booster and helper.
 - e. Thank God for not having judged you the way you judge others.

I've given you enough sin this session to work on for a lifetime.

We'd better pray:

Father, we've dealt with so much sin this hour, it is almost overwhelming. How grateful we are,

Lord, that we don't have to overcome these things ourselves. We couldn't do it. But you have promised that, if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord God, do that cleansing in us. Start to peel away every false and destructive way we have used to spare ourselves the pain of our low self-esteem--that once freed from these things, we may find our worth in You. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE:

From the pamphlet, *Who I Am in Christ*, select one verse that you want to use so you can remember what God says about you. Write it here and memorize it.

Assignment for the Week:

1. If you think that low self-esteem could be one of the roots of your addiction, in your quiet time ask God to show you how you have coped with it and by what means you have tried to escape from the pain of it. Write this in your Prayer Journal and be ready to share it with your group next week.
2. Think of one person whom you are very critical (maybe just to yourself), and start praying for that person and saying good things about them to others.
3. Read the pamphlet, *Who I Am in Christ*.
4. Prayerfully read Psalm 139.