Self-Esteem Part 1
Topic: #403
Category: Thought Life

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Luke 12:6-7

From a developmental perspective, self-esteem is defined as "a global evaluation of one's own worth". Self-esteem begins to develop around age 7 when a young child is cognitively able to compare himself to others and enters a school environment where he begins to notice that not all children have the same traits and abilities.

Psychologist Susan Harter has done extensive research on self-esteem and has concluded that self-esteem is strongly influenced by mental comparisons of our ***ideal selves*** and our ***real selves*** in relation to our ***valued traits***. For example, if you value athleticism you might rank your ideal self as a "5". If your real self (actual performance) is only a "2", low self-esteem results. High self-esteem comes from doing well in the areas we deem valuable.

Complete the "Self-Esteem" worksheet. List your top 10 valued traits, rank your ideal self, then rank your actual self.

To increase your self esteem:

1. Examine your list of traits. Are these things that are really important to you? Or, are these things important to someone else (parents, spouse, etc.) ? Take out any traits that have been imposed on you by others.
2. Evaluate the list again from God's perspective. Are these traits that matter to God? Take out any traits that have been imposed on you by the world – things you think you "should" value, but really don't.
3. Rework the standards by which you give yourself value. Take a week and consider your 10 most valuable traits/characteristics according to God's perspective. Come back next week with your list.

Discussion Questions/ Activity:

1. What traits/characteristics do you see in others in your group?
2. Pin a blank index card to everyone's back. Have the group walk around and write at least one positive trait/characteristic on the back of all other members. Don't use a word someone else has used.
3. Discuss how everyone feels about what was written on their back.

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