

# 20 Days of Trouble

## Topic #6 – Low Self-Esteem

### **Textbook Def:**

Lacking a realistic respect for or favorable impression of oneself; a lack of self-respect.\*

### **Real-Life Look:**

Everyone was invited to the luncheon but me. It might have been an oversight, but even if it was, didn't anyone realize I was missing? Either I'm low priority or they just didn't want my company. Or both.

I really wanted to work on that project at work. I've been preparing behind the scenes to take it on for months, yet when volunteers were solicited, I just couldn't bring myself to raise my hand. There are probably more qualified people for the job and I'd just mess it up anyway.

Why are some people just born naturally perfect? I work and work and work on my body yet I am still overweight and out of shape. The truth is I'll never be any taller, my face will always be round, and my feet will always be way too big. There are just some things plastic surgery can't fix. I'm doomed. And ugly. And alone.

I'll never amount to anything. The mold is set. No one in my family has been successful yet so why should I bother trying. It's easier to just settle and not be disappointed.

### **Sword of the Spirit:**

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.” Psalm 139:14

“But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

## **Breaking It Down:**

Low self-esteem is one of the most difficult ‘troubles’ to overcome. It is often the result of a lifetime of negative self-talk or harmful treatment from others and unwinding the damage done can be a difficult and painful process. There is good news, however. Not only can low self-esteem be conquered, but once progress is made, transformation can happen quite quickly.

Negative Self-Talk – Years ago, a counselor explained to me about ‘the questions we ask ourselves’. He said that left to its own device, our brain will ask whatever it wants, and most of the time, the questions posed are ones which lead to negative answers. This is particularly true, and dangerous, for someone struggling with low self-esteem.

For instance, we can ask, “Why am I so fat?” or we can ask, “How can I accentuate my body type while working on my areas of challenge?” Two very different questions which will yield very different results.

We can certainly be our own worst enemy, but oh what heartbreak and sadness this causes. If we choose to fixate on shortcomings and imperfections, we will never unlock the key to true joy and peace.

Input From Others – Regardless of whether you had wonderfully loving and kind parents or grew up in a dysfunctional mess of a home, as children, we are all susceptible to being treated unkindly by others. This could come from a parent, family member, neighbor, teacher, coach, and / or ‘friends’. We are surrounded by many people during the course of our lives and the cold, hard truth is not everyone has our best interests at heart. There are those who lift themselves up by tearing others down and the results can be emotionally devastating.

As youngsters, we aren’t always aware of what’s right or wrong. We don’t necessarily understand how we should be treated nor have the ability to distinguish what is ‘normal’ and what constitutes abuse. Consequently, we can grow up with deep-rooted distorted views.

As adults, we are tasked with the job of figuring it all out and undoing the damage. This is no task for the weary, but praise be to God, we are not alone.

God is on our side – We are beholden to a God who made each of us perfect in His own image, a God who loves each of us just as we are, and a God who wants nothing more than for us to enjoy the blessing of life.

You’ve heard it before and I’ll tell you again, God doesn’t make mistakes. Nothing about you fell short or didn’t make the grade. Sure, there may be things you want to change or

improve upon, and healthy personal self-growth is valuable, but you must believe that you are working with *the exact canvas* God created you to have.

Whose word are you going to take? The world's or God's? Whose opinion do you value most? It sounds silly when put in those terms, doesn't it? When you begin to act on the principles you KNOW to be true, rather than on the speculations or actions of sinful man, your heart will be healed and you will begin to understand your true worth in the Kingdom of God.

### **The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble:**

Low self-esteem can take a horrific toll and negatively impact every area of your life. It can and will ruin relationships, devastate your college or career path, destroy your health, and steal your joy.

When you declutter a poor self-image, however, you'll have the space available in your heart and mind to embrace self-respect and self-worth.

- Practice positive affirmations (yes, this does help, mirror optional!)
- Be intentional and ask questions which set the stage for beneficial answers.
- Surround yourself with people who are loving, supportive, upbeat, and confident. Conversely, steer clear of negative, hurtful people, even if they are family.
- Put your faith in the One who knows you best and loves you for every dimple, wrinkle, crease, and fold.
- Remember, God loves you regardless of who else is in the room with you or what *they* bring to the table. This isn't a competition. This is about appreciating the beauty and worth that is woven into the fabric of *your being*. God doesn't need to form it, it's already there. No one was left out! You simply need to believe and accept it.

Our days on earth are numbered. While we're here living the life God has bestowed upon us, doesn't it just make sense to make it the best one we can? This starts by valuing the beautiful person you are, inside and out, and appreciating the splendor of God's creation.

When you believe you are worthy, you will begin acting like it.

\*dictionary.reference.com

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