

Gaining Self-Respect

The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these. **—Mark 12:31**

Have you ever heard someone say, "I hate myself"? People who hate themselves don't like other people, and they are miserable. But saying this also gives them a certain kind of self-righteous feeling, as if people will excuse them. But when you have real self-respect you like yourself. You may say, "Oh, I don't think God wants us to like ourselves." Wrong. The apostle Paul said that no man ever hated his own body. (See Ephesians 5:29.) Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and that is part of being human. But when you don't appreciate yourself, something has gone wrong.

The opposite of being confident is being fearful. Are you governed by a spirit of fear where you don't have confidence? Are you always looking over your shoulder thinking, Look who's here! What are they saying? What will they think of me if I do that? Have you ever wanted publicly to confess Christ but have been afraid of what someone would think if they heard about it? Confidence is lost when you lose self-respect.

The gospel of Jesus Christ was designed to give you self-respect. Jesus will never lead you to do anything that would prevent you being true to yourself. If you want to regain that feeling of self-respect, of liking yourself and feeling confident and unashamed, you need to come to the foot of the cross and get right with Him. Once you put your faith in Jesus, you are given the Holy Spirit. He will be with you and will guide you. The Bible will become the most precious book you have ever known, and you will know through the Spirit and the Word how to live your life. You will begin to like yourself and to have confidence, and you will not live with feelings of guilt and shame.

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