

Joyce Meyer: 5 Keys to a Healthy Self-Image

What is your attitude toward yourself? Do you like yourself?

These are important questions to honestly consider because when people don't like themselves, it causes problems in every relationship they have.

I spent many years not liking myself, and even had some self-hatred and self-rejection. My father sexually abused me throughout my childhood, and for a long time, I felt shame because I thought it was my fault—that he did those things to me because something was wrong with me.

But I eventually realized that it was not my fault. And I want you to know that if someone has devalued you, mistreated you, misjudged you, or done something that has left you wounded, their ignorance is not your fault. I also want to encourage you to forgive them, because if you don't, it will only give them power over your life and keep you from being what God has created you to be.

Before God revealed the root of my problem, I was a very frustrated Christian. As I studied the Bible, I saw how God wants us to love others—that we should forgive those who hurt us, consider others before ourselves, be merciful and gracious—but I couldn't do it.

However, when I realized I couldn't love because I wasn't receiving God's love for me and then loving myself, it was life-changing! It took about a year of studying about the love of God in the Bible and praying for Him to change my heart before I really got a revelation of God's love for ME. But when that breakthrough finally happened, it was so wonderful because I could love—and even like—myself. And I could begin loving others the way God loves me!

You know, we can't give away what we don't have, so we have to receive God's love before we can love ourselves or others.

God wants you to focus on what's right with you, not what's wrong with you. He wants you to think about what He's done and is doing in you more than you think about what's going on around you or what isn't working. He wants you to latch on to something good in your life and celebrate that!

Because the more you focus on what's wrong with you, the bigger it will get and the less likely it will be for you to get rid of it. But the more you celebrate the good things, the smaller the bad things become.

I'm not suggesting that we stop trying to change the things we don't like or make improvements in areas that can be better. But we can't make progress in those areas if all we focus on is the negative.

The truth is, God knows all about you and He still loves you and wants you! Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT) says, "Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure."

And 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 says that when you accept Christ as your Savior, you become a new creation and the righteousness of God.

Here are some truths that will help you develop a healthy self-image...

1. Instead of believing it's more "spiritual" to think of yourself as a miserable, wretched sinner, call yourself God's creation, purposely created by His hand, and destined to fulfill a great purpose as you follow His plan for your life.

2. You're valuable because God created you, not because of anything you do.
3. Your worth is not based on what others think of you or how they treat you, but who God says you are.
4. Refuse to reject yourself and declare: "I like myself. I don't like everything I do, but I refuse to ruin the life Jesus died to give me by rejecting myself. I'm not where I need to be, but thank God, I'm not where I used to be!"
5. Remember Philippians 1:6, which says, "...God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (NLT). We all have weaknesses, and no one is perfect, but the important thing is to continue making a little more progress each day in becoming the person God has created you to be.

It's so amazing to know that God has chosen you and He sees who you are in Christ. And you'll be amazed by all of the things that will be fixed in your life if you will love yourself in a balanced way and know who you are in Christ.