

This Biblical Truth Trounces Your Shame and Insecurities

She wasn't then, nor is she now a lovely woman. You most likely wouldn't notice her. If you did, you might quickly pass by without thinking her worthy of much attention. If you see her, she will be a simple plain-dressed woman sitting with her arms folded staring depressingly into space. Her expression is both dour and hopeless. She appears preoccupied with a thousand regrets and pulls the gazer into her sorrow. In my opinion, she is most definitely not much for the eyes.

Picasso painted "Woman With Folded Arms" in 1902. Ninety-eight years later she sold for a cool \$55 million at Christie's Auction house! Wow! At a yard sale, I wouldn't give five bucks for a painting of a depressed-looking woman in a plain blue dress. I know! Embarrassing! Of course, I would gladly pay a few dollars now for such a masterpiece.

Although I didn't see much value in her, someone did. Value is ultimately determined by what someone is willing to pay. And someone paid a hefty price for what I would dismiss as worthless.

Most everyone ultimately struggles with the issue of value. Most wrestle with the idea of worth. Correctly answering the question of what determines our worth becomes critical to a life well lived. Is it looks? Our intelligence? Our accomplishments? The family to which we were born? Is it how many know our name? Or perhaps it is how many "views" and "likes" we get on our social media posts? Is it the number of tickets or albums you can sell? Is your worth determined by how many assets you can amass?

Just as a painting's value is determined by what someone is willing to pay to acquire it; Jesus forever settled your worth

by the price He paid! Good news! Gospel truth. "You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ..." (1 Pet. 1:18-19, AMPC).

You are of inestimable value! He died for you! He suffered on your behalf and bore the justice of Holy God against sin so that you could be redeemed and be forever His! However, far too many of us still live attempting to "measure up." We hear that buying a certain car, living in a certain kind and size of a house, having a certain kind of body, wearing the right "brand," following the success "checklist," is what determines that we are worthy of existing! So many of us live on a hamster's wheel we call life, always trying to measure up to the standards of success pushed by secular and church society.

Some of us resist the idea of "measuring up," only to believe we prove our worth by our going against the grain of normalcy within the culture. Sadly, this only succeeds to create a counterculture that is as anemic as the culture. The cycle just continues to feed the insecurities that imprison and results in crippled lives.

Key to our freedom is our understanding of God and how He views us. Do we see Him as elusive? Difficult to please? Is He continually nitpicking and finding fault? Do we see Him as being quick to point out our errors and remind us of how messed up we are? Is He difficult to please and reluctant to give to us? Is He hard on sin and hard on us? Or do we view Him as a doting old grandfather who never corrects? Always looks the other way? Never challenges us to change because He doesn't want to hurt our feelings? Freely and easily giving us everything we want just because we want it? Is He easy on us, and easy on sin?

The way we view God is key to the way we live. Who is God and what is He like? But how can we know what God is like? Great question and, thankfully, we have a great answer: Jesus. In the Gospels, Jesus says, "He who has seen Me has seen the

Father" (John 14:9, MEV). Jesus is God in action. If you want to know how God views sin, look at Jesus. If you want to know how God sees sinners, look at Jesus.

In John 8, we see how He deals with the woman "caught in adultery," and we catch a glimpse of God in action. Three truths emerge from the narrative that deserves our attention. First, it is evident that God is not OK with sin! Jesus' instructs the little woman, to go and sin no more. Second, the story shows that God is not OK with religious hypocrisy! Jesus forcibly rebukes the religious group of men who came with rocks in hand, willing to execute a sinner while pretending holiness. Third, Jesus proves that while God is never OK with sin or religious pretension, He is in love with sinners!

That gloomy morning, His love shot like a bolt of brilliant lightning striking the earth with a jolt of magnanimous power, "Neither do I condemn you. Go..." (John 8:11). What was this convicted sinner worth? Her worth seemed to consist of only the stones needed to carry out the sentence. She was worthy of death in everyone's eyes but One. Jesus saw worth in her that not even she could see or dare believe.

The law demanded that she die. It was indeed what she deserved. God had said, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20a). Yet God stood there before her in the person of Jesus Christ and released her from what she deserved. Why? Is it because the God of the Old Testament is a different God than the God of the New Testament? Some seem to think so, but the Bible is clear He does not change (see Mal. 3:6, James 1:16). There is no difference between the God of Mt. Sinai and the God of Mt. Calvary.

Why release her from the due death penalty? Had God rethought the Ten Commandments and decided He had been a bit harsh in the past? Or was it the result of recently falling in love with people whom He used only to tolerate? No indeed! Her release from the penalty of her sin because He was there to

take her place. He said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). In astonishment, she walked away from certain death that morning with a new lease on life because Jesus thought her worthy of life and not death. And, thankfully, her story is ours.

"Greater love has no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). He voluntarily gave His life for you and me. Wow! Religion teaches that we are unworthy. Jesus declares us to be "to die for." By HIS actions, He has made us worthy.! Now we just need to know and believe His love. Let's live like someone significantly valued by the Almighty God.

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