

# Redeem Your Esteem

☒ Of all the eternal truths declared in God's Word, one prominent reality is essential to grasp: God made us in His image. We have been exquisitely designed by Him to reflect His image and reveal His likeness. As the "grand finale" of all God's unique creation, mankind stands unequalled, elevated as the Creator's crowning achievement, showing forth His radiance and splendor. Simply put, we're awesome!

Yet in spite of our resident worth and inherent value, many of us deeply struggle to feel a sense of acceptance and love. The recognition of our real significance escapes us, exposing a profound emptiness, leaving us with an acute awareness of unfulfillment. The problem is we were created with an inner desire to be needed and have meaning, with the desire to leave our mark on the world. Consequently, this wanting condition is a set-up for trouble.

Our longing for more feeds the natural obsession to find authentic value through a faulty system involving our own schemes and methods. Although we should be looking to God and His Word to validate our existence, we have, instead, looked to our own ability and human strength to somehow prove our merit. But this striving at importance will prove futile because God has not designed us to find significance through any other means than Himself. Yet the struggle for acceptance continues and the addiction for approval intensifies as we try to fill the void.

So what's up? If we really are so intrinsically valuable and precious, why do we spend so much time trying to improve our self worth? Why are moments of complete self-acceptance so rare and attempts at personal improvement more of the norm? The answer is simple. Our quest for significance is a result

of mistaken identity. We have failed to discern, or believe, who we really are and have settled for a self-appraisal with an “as is, scratch and dent” price tag. We are selling ourselves on clearance because we are unable to see that our approval does not come through what we achieve, how much we earn or the amount of accolades we receive from others. Nor are we rejected because we experience difficult personal failures, traumatic childhood events or because we lack certain talents and abilities. Not so!

God loves us unconditionally because we are His possession ... not only by creation but also by redemption. Although it is true that in ourselves we fail and fall short of God’s original purpose for us, the good news is we are not *in ourselves*. If we have been redeemed by God’s Son, Jesus, through the provision made for us on the cross, then we are no longer “in” ourselves, we are “in” Christ.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.” (Eph. 1:3-4, emphasis added).

We are His dear children, washed and forgiven by His sacrifice and made blameless and holy in His sight. This truth boldly confronts the subtle deception that has so many people bound. They have become slaves to the approval of others and captive to the drive of selfish ambition, all in an attempt to feel good about themselves. But Christ has set us free from this fruitless endeavor and has given us the right to say with confidence:

- I am loveable because of who I am in Christ, not because of what I do.
- I do not have to strive to earn my acceptance because God has made me accepted in the beloved.
- I am not accepted based on my performance or my ability

to get someone to like me.

- I do not have to keep up with today's so-called standards of living to be worthwhile or credible.
- I can have opinions that differ from others without fear of being disqualified from love because God's love makes me secure in Him. Therefore, I can risk being me.
- I am free to explore and develop all the uniqueness of my God-given personality without penalty.
- I no longer have to struggle or perform to fill the gnawing void that tells me I am nothing without accomplishments, awards or popularity.

Remember God accepts and loves you not just because He's God but also because He created you, He knows you and He is intimately involved in everything you do. Won't you accept His unconditional love today?