



Self-Esteem

SCRIPTURE'S VIEW OF SELF-ESTEEM

ARCHIBALD D. HART

(Jeremiah 1:5)

Jeremiah had a difficult life, but he had high self-esteem, for Jeremiah 1:5 says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Clearly God had marked Jeremiah's life for great service, and Jeremiah saw himself in relation to God's plan for his life.

God has done the same for each individual (Ps. 139:16). God has each person's life in His hand; He created each person for a purpose. Every believer should stand tall with high self-esteem by understanding who he or she is in Christ.

THE MYSTERY OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem has important implications for psychological and spiritual health because it determines how people feel about themselves and what they believe they are capable of becoming. Perhaps one could call it, "the attitude of the self to the self." Unfortunately, most people feel they do not measure up. These feelings prevent people from becoming what God has in mind for them. The result is what is now labeled "low self-esteem." Low self-esteem generally describes feelings of self-hate, rejection, and an inability to accept oneself as special and unique. It not only involves self-rejection, but rejection of what God intended the person to be in Him.

HOW SELF-ESTEEM IS DERIVED

Self-esteem begins with an image or concept of oneself. It is an attitude people develop toward themselves. Therefore, if a person's self-image is distorted, that person's self-esteem will be as well. When people grow up seeing themselves as unattractive or incompetent, their self-esteem will be shaped accordingly.

Paul, however, encourages Christians

to "think soberly" when it comes to evaluating themselves (Rom. 12:3). This means to think "with absolute honesty." Why is this important? Because if people cannot be honest about who they are as persons, they cannot relate to others in a healthy way. Honesty includes realizing that most people's self-image is the opposite of their true worth. Their self-concept does not reflect the indescribable value God places on their lives.

The Bible clearly identifies the problem of our sinful nature and its self-centeredness (Jer. 17:9). It also reminds us of the confusion that results from sinful thinking (Rom. 1:18-32). The human mind is not very reliable when it comes to self-concept because of our sinful nature. It easily rearranges facts and feelings to produce the wrong effect. Despite its wonderful complexity, the mind can do bizarre things. It reacts to the feedback it receives from its earliest years in such an unrealistic way that very few people reach adulthood with a clear and accurate picture of themselves. In fact, one of the reasons why personal success often cannot fix longstanding feelings of inferiority or low self-esteem is the human filtering system that downplays successes and exaggerates personal failures. Many people either distort their self-image in a negative way ("I am a terrible person") or in an exaggerated positive manner ("I am better than others"). Culture is no help in this matter be-

cause is
cess. Is
up not
they w

HEALI

Roman:
dealing
ed self-
whethe
image o
reality.

come n
about t
only to
their sp
ing to a
weakne
they fo

Stop De
Many p
in child
labeled
undern
tance. T

humilit
down
People
themsel
cizing

their
though

Use Ps

Christia
positive
has gra
name. T

make t
gifts are
affirm
work. I
for ma
be. Pos
will he
esteem

To Learn
also the

cause it, too, distorts realistic views of success. Is it any wonder that many people end up not liking who they are and wishing they were someone else?

HEALING PEOPLE'S SELF-ESTEEM

Romans 12:3 contains some wise advice for dealing with the consequences of a distorted self-image. The solution is no different whether one has an inflated or deflated image of oneself—both are distortions of reality. The challenge is for people to become more honest regarding how they feel about themselves. This is important not only to their emotional health, but also to their spiritual health. They need to be willing to admit their strengths as well as their weaknesses. People can learn to do this if they follow these guidelines:

Stop Degrading Oneself

Many people learn to criticize themselves in childhood, especially if their parents labeled them as inferior. Self-degradation undermines confidence and self-acceptance. They need a clear understanding of humility. Humility is not putting oneself down or denying one's God-given gifts. People really have no right to degrade themselves. When they do, they are criticizing God's handiwork. They must renew their mind by being "sober" with their thoughts.

Use Positive Reinforcement

Christians need to be able to value their positive points and appreciate the gifts God has given them in order to minister in His name. They shouldn't think that their gifts make them better than other people, but gifts are meant to be used. Believers should affirm their gifts and praise God for His work. In that way, they are praising God for making them who He wanted them to be. Positive self-statements are honest and will help reverse years of negative self-esteem.

Learn to Value True Worth

In Romans 12:3, Paul encouraged his readers to "think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." This means God gives His people the power to fulfill His ministries. No one is superior or inferior. Everyone has good and bad points. Believers are to celebrate the good points and ask for God's help in working on their own bad points. True value comes from God, and believers should celebrate it as part of their understanding of God's work in their lives.

Learn to Value Others

The more they work at valuing others, the greater freedom people feel to value themselves for who they are in God's sight. Romans 14:13 says, "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore. . . ." Low self-esteem is caused by self-hate. Self-hate leads to hating others. When people conquer their self-rejection, they open the door to be more accepting of both themselves and others.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of self-esteem include:

- Genesis 1:26, 27
- Psalms 8:3-6; 139:1-18
- Galatians 2:20; 3:26-4:7
- Ephesians 2:4-10
- Philippians 2:1-18
- 1 Peter 2:9, 10

↳ Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on self-esteem at Matthew 10:29-31 on page 1245. See also the personality profile of Josiah on page 582.

to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,^a how much more will they call those of his household! ²⁶Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

JESUS TEACHES THE FEAR OF GOD

²⁷"Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. ²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. ³⁰But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

CONFESS CHRIST BEFORE MEN

³²"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

CHRIST BRINGS DIVISION

³⁴"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to 'set a man against

his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; ³⁶and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'^a ³⁷He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

A CUP OF COLD WATER

⁴⁰"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. ⁴¹He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. ⁴²And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

JOHN THE BAPTIST SENDS MESSENGERS TO JESUS

11 Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

²And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of^a his

10:25 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebub*.

10:36 ^aMicah 7:6 **11:2** ^aNU-Text reads *by* for *two of*.

KEY PASSAGE

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

(10:29-31)



Self-Esteem

Jesus described God's loving concern for every person, explaining that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." He added that because God cares even for small birds—"not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will"—imagine how much more He cares for His people.

What a boost to personal encouragement! We are important to God—created in His image and loved. He loves us so much, in fact, that He "gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

To Learn More: Turn to the article about self-esteem on pages 960, 961. See also the personality profile of Josiah on page 582.

governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. ⁹When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and *which* they had brought back to Jerusalem. ¹⁰Then they put *it* in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house. ¹¹They gave *it* to the craftsmen and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. ¹²And the men did the work faithfully. Their overseers *were* Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and

Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise. *Others of* the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, ¹³*were* over the burden bearers and *were* overseers of all who did work in any kind of service. And *some of the Levites were* scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

¹⁴Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD *given* by Moses. ¹⁵Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. ¹⁷And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the over-

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Self-Esteem

THE DIFFERENCE ONE PERSON CAN MAKE

(2 CHRONICLES 34:26-28)

What a difference one person can make. And when that person is a king, what a difference he can make for his country!

Josiah began to reign at age 8. In the eighth year of his reign, at age 16, he "began to seek the God of his father David." Through that seeking, God showed Josiah that he needed to "purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images" (2 Chr. 34:3). So Josiah faithfully purged the entire nation of idol worship. Then he began to repair God's temple. God rewarded Josiah's faithfulness by allowing Hilkiah the high priest to discover the Book of the Law. When the book was dusted off and read, Josiah realized with horror how far the nation had strayed from God's expectations. Josiah asked God what he should do next.

God explained through a prophet that Judah was suffering because of a long series of sinful choices that the leaders and people of the nation had made over a long period. God stated that the nation would indeed pay for its sins. But because Josiah's heart was tender, God promised his eyes would not see all the calamity which He would bring on Judah and its inhabitants (34:27, 28). The final demise of the kingdom would not occur during Josiah's lifetime, because Josiah had tried to turn the nation around.

God often works through His people to accomplish His will. One believer can help another person turn around a life; one believer can help an entire nation reverse its course. In each case, God works through one person whose life is surrendered to Him. Every believer has an important role to play in building God's Kingdom. Whether God uses us to bring one or millions to Him, we must seek and follow His will. The believer who is yielded to God will have an impact for Him.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about self-esteem on pages 960, 961. See also the key passage note at Matthew 10:29-31 on page 1245.

And he said, "Here I am."

⁵Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." ⁶Moreover He said, "I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

⁷And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. ⁹Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

¹¹But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

¹²So He said, "I will certainly be with you.

And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

¹³Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?"

¹⁴And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

¹⁵Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name forever, and this *is* My memorial to all generations.' ¹⁶Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; ¹⁷and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey." ¹⁸Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of

SOUL NOTE



Listen to God (3:1-6) Moses had run from Egypt, but God was determined to use him for the task of bringing his people out of slavery there. God then spoke, warned of His holiness, described who He was, and gave Moses the task. When we read God's Word, we are in His presence. God speaks through His Word, shows us His holiness, tells us about Himself, and gives us tasks. Come to God's Word, and you will discover who He is and what He wants you to do. **Topic: Knowing God**

SOUL NOTE



God Is with You (3:11) Moses was certain God was making a mistake by choosing him to lead the Israelites. His five excuses indicated a lack of confidence in his ability to get the job done. He had: (1) a crisis of identity ("who am I?" 3:11); (2) a crisis of authority ("what is His name?" 3:13); (3) a crisis of faith ("they will not believe me," 4:1); (4) a crisis of ability ("I am not eloquent," 4:10); and (5) a crisis of obedience ("send . . . whomever else," 4:13). Yet as God was with him, Moses led the nation to freedom. With God's help and guidance, great things are possible.

Topic: Self-Esteem

THE FAMILY OF ADAM—SETH TO ABRAHAM

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, ²Cainan,^a Mahalalel, Jared, ³Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, ⁴Noah,^a Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁵The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ⁶The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Diphath,^a and Togarmah. ⁷The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshishah,^a Kittim, and Rodanim.^b

⁸The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. ⁹The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabta,^a Raama,^b and Sabtecha. The sons of Raama were Sheba and Dedan. ¹⁰Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. ¹¹Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹²Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and the Caphtorim). ¹³Canaan begot Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth; ¹⁴the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; ¹⁵the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; ¹⁶the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

¹⁷The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.^a ¹⁸Arphaxad begot Shelah, and Shelah begot Eber. ¹⁹To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg,^a for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. ²⁰Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²¹Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²²Ebal,^a Abimael, Sheba, ²³Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.

²⁴Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, ²⁵Eber, Peleg, Reu, ²⁶Scrug, Nahor, Terah, ²⁷and Abram, who is Abraham. ²⁸The sons of Abraham were Isaac and Ishmael.

THE FAMILY OF ISHMAEL

²⁹These are their genealogies: The firstborn of Ishmael was Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ³⁰Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,^a

Tema, ³¹Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael.

THE FAMILY OF KETURAH

³²Now the sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine, were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan. ³³The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

THE FAMILY OF ISAAC

³⁴And Abraham begot Isaac. The sons of Isaac were Esau and Israel. ³⁵The sons of Esau were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. ³⁶And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zephi,^a Gatam, and Kenaz; and by Timna,^b Amalek. ³⁷The sons of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

THE FAMILY OF SEIR

³⁸The sons of Seir were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. ³⁹And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Homam; Lotan's sister was Timna. ⁴⁰The sons of Shobal were Alian,^a Manahath, Ebal, Shephi,^b and Onam. The sons of Zibeon were Ajah and Anah. ⁴¹The son of Anah was Dishon. The sons of Dishon were Hamran,^a Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ⁴²The sons of Ezer were Bilhan,

1:2 ^aHebrew *Qenan* **1:4** ^aFollowing Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint adds the sons of Noah. **1:6** ^aSpelled *Riphath* in Genesis 10:3 **1:7** ^aSpelled *Tarshish* in Genesis 10:4 ^bSpelled *Dodanim* in Genesis 10:4 **1:9** ^aSpelled *Sabtah* in Genesis 10:7 ^bSpelled *Raamah* in Genesis 10:7 **1:17** ^aSpelled *Mash* in Genesis 10:23 **1:19** ^aLiterally *Division* **1:22** ^aSpelled *Obal* in Genesis 10:28 **1:30** ^aSpelled *Hadar* in Genesis 25:15 **1:36** ^aSpelled *Zepho* in Genesis 36:11 ^bCompare Genesis 36:12 **1:40** ^aSpelled *Alvan* in Genesis 36:23 ^bSpelled *Shepho* in Genesis 36:23 **1:41** ^aSpelled *Hemdan* in Genesis 36:26



SOUL NOTE

You Matter (ch. 1) The genealogies in 1 Chronicles were compiled after the people of Judah had been taken into captivity in Babylon. The people did not want the records of their heritage to be lost. Although the Bible tells nothing about most of these people, each name listed represents a life—a person created

in God's image and valuable to Him. Our lives may never be recorded for history, but we have a moment in eternity to serve God and make a difference in others' lives. God knows the name, face, and life of each person—and He knows you. **Topic: Self-Esteem**

Zaavan, and Uz and Ara-

THE KINGS

⁴³Now the the land of the children the name when Beza Bozrah reigned died, Husi reigned died, Hadad Midian in place. The Hadad died his place. Rehoboth-

⁴⁹When S Achbor reigned Hanan died the name was Meha daughter of the chiefs Aliah,^a Chief Elah Teman, Chief Iran

THE FAMILY

2 These eon. Joseph, B

FROM JUD

³The son lah. The daughter firstborn the LORD daughter All the s

⁵The son Calcol. a

⁷The son of Israel thing.

⁸The son

⁹Also

him was

¹⁰Ram

begot N

And deliver me,
 2 Lest they tear me like a lion,
 Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is*
 none to deliver.

O LORD my God, if I have done this:
 If there is iniquity in my hands,
 4 If I have repaid evil to him who was at
 peace with me,
 Or have plundered my enemy without
 cause,
 5 Let the enemy pursue me and overtake
me;
 Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,
 And lay my honor in the dust. Selah

6 Arise, O LORD, in Your anger;
 Lift Yourself up because of the rage of
 my enemies;
 Rise up for me^a to the judgment You
 have commanded!

7 So the congregation of the peoples shall
 surround You;
 For their sakes, therefore, return on
 high.

8 The LORD shall judge the peoples;
 Judge me, O LORD, according to my
 righteousness,
 And according to my integrity within me.

9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked
 come to an end,
 But establish the just;
 For the righteous God tests the hearts
 and minds.

10 My defense is of God,
 Who saves the upright in heart.

11 God is a just judge,
 And God is angry with the wicked every
 day.

12 If he does not turn back,
 He will sharpen His sword;
 He bends His bow and makes it
 ready.

13 He also prepares for Himself instruments
 of death;
 He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

14 Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;
 Yes, he conceives trouble and brings
 forth falsehood.

15 He made a pit and dug it out,
 And has fallen into the ditch *which* he
 made.

16 His trouble shall return upon his own
 head,
 And his violent dealing shall come down
 on his own crown.

17 I will praise the LORD according to His
 righteousness,
 And will sing praise to the name of the
 LORD Most High.

PSALM 8

THE GLORY OF THE LORD IN CREATION

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of
 Gath.^a A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD, our Lord,
 How excellent is Your name in all the
 earth,
 Who have set Your glory above the
 heavens!

7:6 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Targum, and
 Vulgate; Septuagint reads *O LORD my God*.
 8:title ^aHebrew *Al Gittith*



SOUL NOTE

Special and Important (8:3-5) Human beings often feel small compared to the rest of creation. The psalmist asked God, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (8:4). Insignificant, sinful human beings don't seem worthy of God's care. Yet God does care, for He created people "a little lower than the angels" and crowned them "with glory and honor" (8:5). He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us so that we could one day have the glory and honor for which He created us. We are important to God. **Topic: Self-Esteem**

PSALM 100

A SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S
FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE*A Psalm of Thanksgiving.*

- 1 Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
Know that the LORD, He is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;^a
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
- Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.
For the LORD is good;
His mercy is everlasting,
And His truth endures to all generations.

PSALM 101

PROMISED FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD

A Psalm of David.

- 1 I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.
- I will behave wisely in a perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
- 3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not cling to me.
A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will not know wickedness.

- 5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
Him I will destroy;
The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart,
Him I will not endure.

- 6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land,
That they may dwell with me;
He who walks in a perfect way,
He shall serve me.
- 7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house;
He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.
Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land,
That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD.

PSALM 102

THE LORD'S ETERNAL LOVE

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the LORD.

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
- 2 Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.
- For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned like a hearth.

100:3 ^aFollowing Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, many Hebrew manuscripts, and Targum read *we are His*.

SOUL NOTE



We Are His People (100:1-3) Psalm 100 is an expression of confidence in God. We know who we are because we know who He is: "Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who has made us . . . we are His people" (100:3). Thus, God's people can enter His presence with thanksgiving, having confidence that His mercy and truth are available at all times. Secure in our relationship with God, we can be confident of our value in this world as we "serve the LORD with gladness" (100:2).

Topic: Self-Esteem

When you pass through the waters, I
will be with you;
 And through the rivers, they shall not
 overflow you.
 When you walk through the fire, you
 shall not be burned,
 Nor shall the flame scorch you.
 For I *am* the LORD your God,
 The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
 I gave Egypt for your ransom,
 Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
 Since you were precious in My sight,
 You have been honored,
 And I have loved you;
 Therefore I will give men for you,
 And people for your life.
 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
 I will bring your descendants from the
 east,
 And gather you from the west;
 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
 And to the south, 'Do not keep them
 back!'
 Bring My sons from afar,
 And My daughters from the ends of the
 earth—
 Everyone who is called by My name,
 Whom I have created for My glory;
 I have formed him, yes, I have made
 him."

Bring out the blind people who have
 eyes,
 And the deaf who have ears.
 Let all the nations be gathered together,
 And let the people be assembled.
 Who among them can declare this,
 And show us former things?
 Let them bring out their witnesses, that
 they may be justified;
 Or let them hear and say, "*It is truth.*"

¹⁰ "You are My witnesses," says the LORD,

"And My servant whom I have chosen,
 That you may know and believe Me,
 And understand that I *am* He.
 Before Me there was no God formed,
 Nor shall there be after Me.
 I, *even I, am* the LORD,
 And besides Me *there is* no savior.
¹² I have declared and saved,
 I have proclaimed,
 And *there was* no foreign god among you;
 Therefore you *are* My witnesses,"
 Says the LORD, "that I *am* God.
¹³ Indeed before the day *was*, I *am* He;
 And *there is* no one who can deliver out
 of My hand;
 I work, and who will reverse it?"

¹⁴ Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
 The Holy One of Israel:
 "For your sake I will send to Babylon,
 And bring them all down as fugitives—
 The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their
 ships.
 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
 The Creator of Israel, your King."

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD, who makes a way
 in the sea
 And a path through the mighty waters,
¹⁷ Who brings forth the chariot and horse,
 The army and the power
 (They shall lie down together, they shall
 not rise;
 They are extinguished, they are
 quenched like a wick):
¹⁸ "Do not remember the former things,
 Nor consider the things of old.
¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing,
 Now it shall spring forth;
 Shall you not know it?
 I will even make a road in the
 wilderness

SOUL NOTE



Who We Are (43:1) Society determines people's importance based on what they do or what they know. God chose Israel to be His covenant people and to display His glory to the nations. God promised: "I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine." As a nation, Israel failed to recognize their Messiah, and God established His new covenant with all who would trust Jesus Christ as Savior. God's people know that Christ is their God, Savior, and King. Our self-esteem is not based on what we do, but on who we are in Christ. **Topic: Self-Esteem**

is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

SIN AND THE CHILD OF GOD

⁴Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. ⁶Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. ⁸He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

THE IMPERATIVE OF LOVE

¹⁰In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹²not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

¹³Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother^a abides in death. ¹⁵Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

3:14 ^aNU-Text omits *his brother*.

SOUL NOTE



God's Own (3:1) No one can love more than God. The thought of God's astounding love bestowed on sinful humanity is beyond understanding. It's incomprehensible that while we were still sinners in rebellion against God, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Through that sacrifice, God brought His own to Himself, bestowing the title and relationship of "children." He allows us to call Him Father. No believer should ever feel alone, worthless, or unimportant. Everyone who has faith in Christ is a beloved child of God! **Topic: Self-Esteem**

KEY PASSAGE



Love Languages

BEING BILINGUAL

(3:18)

People say "I love you" in many ways besides speaking the words. In fact, while words are important, saying words without backing them up with actions will make the words meaningless. John wrote to believers, "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

When expressing love to a spouse, children, or dear friends, we should consider their "language." Certainly they will understand the words, but they will hear the message better through certain kinds of actions. For some people, their love language is physical touch; for others, a gift will show love; still others would prefer to have quality time. As we learn what "language" our loved ones speak, we then can add to our words the deeds that will show our love.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about love languages on pages 1680, 1681. See also the personality profile of Mary on page 1336.

INTRODUCTION AND BENEDICTION

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, ²who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

GREETING THE SEVEN CHURCHES

⁴John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed^a us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶and has made us kings^a and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*^a says the Lord,^b “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

VISION OF THE SON OF MAN

⁹I, John, both^a your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testi-

mony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and,^a “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia:^b to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me,^a “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹Write^a the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden

1:5 ^aNU-Text reads *loves us and freed*; M-Text reads *loves us and washed*. **1:6** ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *a kingdom*. **1:8** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *the Beginning and the End*. ^bNU-Text and M-Text add *God*. **1:9** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *both*. **1:11** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *I am through third and*. ^bNU-Text and M-Text omit *which are in Asia*. **1:17** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*. **1:19** ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *Therefore, write*

SOUL NOTE



Jesus' Own (1:5) Revelation gives an awe-inspiring picture of Jesus as the King of kings, the Ruler over all of earth's other monarchs. At His word, God's enemies will be rounded up to be judged. Believers will have nothing to fear, however, for they will have a part in Christ's reign and will assist Him in His kingdom. King Jesus loved us so much that He sacrificed His life for us, and will return someday to take us to be with Him. We are God's beloved children—His most treasured possession. When we feel overwhelmed, we can picture our great King and remember that He will soon return for us. **Topic: Self-Esteem**