



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 12

February 1, 2026

No. 5

Down On Self?

Dan S. Shipley

Professional people tell us that low self-esteem is a serious and wide spread problem affecting just about every strata and age level of our society. I believe it. Failure, unattractiveness, obesity, lack of formal education, feeling of not being needed, lack of confidence and the like are the culprits robbing many of a sense of worth. They produce feelings of inferiority and self-pity that can be detrimental to both sinner and saint — especially if the saint happens to be weak in faith.

Of all people, God's people ought to have a lofty, yet humble sense of worth. In the first place, every man is a kinsman and offspring of the almighty God (Acts 17:29). That makes every individual special in a way that deserves appreciation. The "inward man" (2 Cor. 4:16) is fashioned after God's own image (Gen. 1:27). As we have "fathers of our flesh," we also have a "Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9). There is within every man that which does not and cannot come from fleshly parents but only from our spiritual Father. What consolation to remember that this spirit shall one day "return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). We should say, with the little boy pictured on a poster, "I know I'm SOMEBODY, 'cause God don't make no junk!"

But, not only am I the offspring of God, I am the continual object of his love and concern. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon Him, **because he careth for you**" (1 Pet. 5:6,7) Yes, "God so loved the world..." but that means He loves YOU! Paul viewed it in personal terms when he says of Christ that He "loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). So should we. And here's something else God's people need to remember. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), He sees you and me as His children and objects of His love as much as Paul, Timothy, Peter or any Old Testament worthy. As the popular writer, Francis Schaeffer put it, "With God there are no little people." The question is not whether I am a great apostle, elder, preacher, or teacher, **but whether I am glorifying God in my life, where I am, wit what I have, now?** 1 Pet. 4:11 Many deceive themselves into thinking that they could do more for the Lord in some other place and at some future time if they only had more resources or talents. Being down of self causes one to think of "what might have been" and hinders possibilities of rewarding service now.

No person is worthless and viewing self as such is deceiving and hurtful. We have been redeemed at the greatest cost ever paid for anything, "with precious blood ... even the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:19). We have a soul appraised by the Lord as being of inestimable worth (Matt. 16:26). In Christ we have been made truly rich (2 Cor. 6:10). DO WE REALLY BELIEVE IT?

To walk by faith is to recognize that apart from the Lord we are and can be nothing. But in Him, thanks be to God, we have a greatness that we need to remember, appreciate, and reflect in our daily living!

Steps

David White

Steps are interesting things. Often, the process of how things work in our lives are divided into steps, steps we have to follow in order to succeed. All of us have stories of past experiences that demonstrate to us that missing a step, even a small one, can ruin a project. Maybe we didn't follow the step of stirring our paint thoroughly before applying it to our walls, and therefore the color didn't spread evenly. Perhaps missing a step while building our Ikea bookcase eventually caused those shelves to collapse and books to fall to the floor. In building a new home, would we hire a contractor that

we knew would take shortcuts and was known to leave out a step or two and deviate from the original blueprints? Only if we are asking for trouble.

So when it comes to our spiritual lives, those steps, and their importance, should not be taken for granted. God has a well-documented plan for us to follow if we are to have everlasting life in heaven. And yet those directions, those blueprints, those steps, are being altered today in twisted ways by humans looking for a shortcut to the plan spelled out for us in the Scriptures.

We all know the plan of salvation revealed in God's word and the steps we must follow in order to obtain salvation and a hope of heaven. Romans 10:17 tells us we must hear the word which produces faith, a belief in what we have heard (Mark 16:15-16). That belief demands repentance (Acts 17:30) and a confession that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10). The final step is being baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). If we were to only do the first four steps, would we still have the hope promised to us in Romans 15:4? Certainly not! Just as the painter, the furniture assembler, and the contractor need to follow the step-by-step plans laid out before them at the job site, so too must we follow the Bible, and only the Bible, in ensuring our eternal salvation. When one step is removed, we have no longer done what God has asked of us.

For the most part, our religious friends take little issue with this plan of salvation described above with one exception. The necessity of baptism is often denied as being a work where we are trying to earn our salvation. This step, while committed to as an outward sign of an inward grace, is deemed not essential for salvation.

Others reject this step due to convenience's sake. It is much easier to "convert" people by simply telling them to accept Jesus into their hearts. In our modern world we want things to be done quickly and efficiently. Yet is this the pattern we see in the New Testament? Every single case of conversion in the Book of Acts includes baptism, starting with the day of Pentecost when Peter told those in his hearing to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins."

Sadly, many reject the simple steps of salvation due to a lack of knowledge. They have not followed 2 Timothy 2:15 and actually studied and read what the Lord requires of us to obey the gospel. For many, all they know is what they have been told, not what they can see for themselves by looking into the "perfect law of liberty."

Still others reject the demands of the Scriptures to be baptized because in doing so they feel they condemn loved ones that have died having not obeyed the gospel. By putting on Christ themselves in baptism, they feel they are declaring their loved ones to be lost eternally. However, the Scriptures contain God's truth and His will. Rejecting His teachings, regardless of our reasons, do not change them. Circumstances do not change the will of God.

In the end, we are commanded to teach all the world (Mark 16:15). It is not our job to decide if those we teach will be receptive or not. However, it is definitely our job to teach the steps laid out so clearly in the Scriptures.

Now it is certainly worth noting that these steps of salvation are not just a checklist of things to do. They should each be embraced with conviction, sincerity, and a determined commitment to live by the truths we have heard, believed, confessed and obeyed.

While we continue to teach the steps of salvation with sincerity and truth, let us not forget that baptism is commanded and has always been essential for the washing away of our sins (Acts 22:16). Let us hold fast to that teaching and never compromise the truth of God and the plan of salvation so plainly laid out in order that we might have eternal life with Him.

If we've seen that eliminating necessary steps can lead to an unevenly painted wall, a bookcase that won't hold books, or a poorly constructed home, would it be wise for us to risk ignoring important steps laid out in the word of God in our quest for eternal salvation? Let's always be determined to follow the pattern God has delivered to us. It's only a step.