

Chapter 18

Love, An Essential Ingredient

Loving Yourself

Loving yourself is an essential part of your walk of sanctification. It is how God intended for you to live your life. It is the only way that you can live the victorious Christian life that both you and the Lord would like you to live. Through the previous chapters the act of loving yourself has been woven into the principles and scriptures. In this chapter I will bring to the forefront and summarize the concept of loving yourself.

If you only read this chapter, you might misperceive what I am saying.

I want to emphasize that it is of great importance that this chapter be understood in context with the rest of this book, and in conjunction with everything I have said therein. Read the rest of the book first!

For instance, you might conclude that I don't believe we have a sin nature. But when you read the entire book you know that is not my position.

At War With Yourself

When you are at war with yourself, you are crippled. This internal war is destructive because it is not how God intended for you to live.

- You are a house literally divided against itself.
- You deny legitimate needs that you have. Or you refuse to have your legitimate needs met in legitimate ways because you perceive that as being "selfish."
- You are driven by unmet needs to fill them in illegitimate ways.
- You are denied the use of the gifts God has placed in you.
- You are empty inside.

- You judge yourself and reap the consequences of this sin.
- You feel the pain of the Big Hurt which results from being alienation from yourself.
- You live in fear of the Big Hurt and are driven to find ways to avoid feeling it.
- You are in bondage to these forces and cannot live the life that God intended.
- You are the "wretched man" in Romans 7:15-24.¹

A Truce

The war needs to come to an end. You need to make peace with yourself. You need to stop judging yourself. You need to forgive yourself and be forgiven for this. You need to begin to walk out a new life of cleaning up the messes you make whenever you judge yourself. Because you have been doing this for so long, walking in judgment of yourself has been a well-worn path. It will take time for this habitual way of living to recede. Because it is so automatic and prevalent, you will need to be vigilant. You need to listen to your Treasure Inside continually. You will feel the Big Hurt whenever you judge yourself, because your Treasure Inside will tell you about it. When you feel the Big Hurt, you will know you need to forgive and be forgiven.

More Than A Truce

However, ending the war is not enough. In a truce the parties have simply ceased to be actively at war. A truce does not mean the parties are friendly, and it definitely does not mean they are so positively disposed towards each other that they love each other.

So you must move beyond a truce (absence of the bad) to loving and blessing yourself (the presence of the good). You need to begin to relate to yourself the way God relates towards you. He loves you, and you are to do the same to your Treasure Inside. If you either do not or cannot keep the second great commandment of Jesus to love yourself, life will not go well for you. Here is why:

¹ **Romans 7:15, 24-25**, *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do . . . O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Loving Yourself Is How God Intended For You To Live

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

God did not say *love your neighbor and hate yourself*. He said to love your neighbor in exactly the same way that you love yourself, and to love yourself with the same kind of love that you love God (*agape*).² God didn't just say to love the Holy Spirit that is in you, although you are to do that too. He also said to love **yourself! You!**³

Remember that God's commandments are simply descriptions of how the spiritual world works. If we do things that are contrary to what these commandments say, we will suffer. With this in mind, it shouldn't be any surprise that life does not go well for us when we break this commandment to love ourselves. This is such a central commandment that it is one of the commandments upon which hang all the Law and the Prophets!

God created you, and He knows your frame. You are made in His image, and God is love. This is the reason why He commanded you to love yourself.

- Only when you love yourself can you love others.
- Only when you love yourself can you truly love God.
- Only when your own cup is full can you freely give to others.
- Only when you love yourself can you fellowship with God.

² When I used to read this commandment to love my neighbor as myself, I used to immediately say to myself, "Of course I love myself. God just wants me to love others that much too." However, I later realized that I treated myself terribly. I used to constantly put myself down with statements like, "You dummy. How could you be so stupid." I didn't love myself. I hated myself. I was so critical and abusive of myself that if I had treated other people in this same way, nobody would want to be within 100 yards of me. They wouldn't put up with it.

³ See **Endnote #18-3** for a discussion of what love is.

Also see **Chapter 14**, "Face to Face With Jesus."

- Only when you love yourself can you be sanctified.
- Only when you love yourself can you live the victorious Christian life.
- Only when you love yourself and the gifts God has placed in you can you be all He intended for you to be.
- Only when you love yourself does Satan lose.

Because these above truths are so enormously important and so central to our Christian walk, Satan has worked very diligently to cause each of us to judge ourselves and to hate ourselves, and thus cause The Wall of separation.

Giving Yourself The Blessing

Chapter 10, "Your Worst Trauma," discusses "The Blessing," which is the "good" that we all need as children and we all continue to need daily as adults, or we will be wounded. Part of living in a loving relationship with yourself is to give yourself "The Blessing"! Jesus will always do this, but you also need to. The part of you that is your Treasure Inside wants and needs your love. I encourage you to review that part of Chapter 9, "There Is Buried Treasure." The genuine giving of The Blessing to another person demonstrates that you care enough about them to spend time with them and to be a student of who they are. Doing this for another person says that you want to get to know them, and that you are thrilled with who God made them to be. This also needs to be your attitude towards yourself!

An Example From My Life

This idea of loving myself was absolutely foreign to me. For example, I used to see my body as a problem whenever it got in the way of my plans. When my body became tired, I would whip it to get it to do what I wanted it to do. Or if I got a side ache when I was running, I would rebuke the pain. I didn't

Part of living in a loving relationship with yourself is to give yourself "The Blessing"!

understand that my body was simply telling me the status of what was going on inside. When there was pain, there was a problem.

Now I find myself listening to my body. When it isn't feeling good, it is not "bad." Rather, if my body is fussing, it is simply telling me that there is a problem. Now I stop and listen to it. I am its friend, not its foe, and vice versa. I sympathize with it, and seek to find out what is wrong. Then I do what I can to fix the problem. When the problem is fixed the pain stops. We (our Head and our Treasure Inside) are in this life together.⁴

Others Will Act Differently Towards You

I am sure that you have met people whom you immediately like. When this happens, you have read their heart and like what you sense. In the same way, others read your heart. When you love

yourself, you will want others to meet the real you. It is as though you are saying, "Here I am. I love me. You will too." You subconsciously broadcast this, and others sense this message. On the other hand, when you hate yourself, you try to hide who you really are. You expect that if other people see who you really are, they won't like you. After all, you don't like you. You subconsciously broadcast a message that says, "Please don't get too close to me. I hate me. If you find out who I really am, you will hate me too." When other people sense these subliminal messages, they find themselves feeling about you the same way you feel about yourself. They like you, or they dislike you. They find themselves acting towards you in accordance with your feelings about yourself, even though they may not understand why they like you or dislike you.

Inside-Out

Therefore we are to live life **inside-out**. Most of us have been living life **outside-in**. We have only trusted our intellect and willpower, which are those parts of us of which we are conscious, and over which we can exert control. We have distrusted what is below

Living from the outside-in does not work very well.

⁴ See **Endnote 18-1** for more on trying to be what I am not, versus loving who God made me to be.

our level of consciousness and not subject to our purposeful control. We have tried to live as though those parts in our Treasure Inside do not exist. This **outside-in** way of living has not worked very well, because God did not design us to operate that way. The truth is that the largest part of who we really are lies in our Treasure Inside, including our ability to commune with Him. God always intended for us to live **inside-out**.⁵

What Is Love?

In this chapter I have talked a lot about love. But what is love? Where does it come from? How can I do it?

Be sure and read Endnote #18-3 where I have written about this more extensively.

Summary

Unfortunately, most of us have believed the lies spoken to us by the World and Satan, and have therefore harshly judged ourselves. Because we have believed these lies, we have been looking inside ourselves for things to kill, instead of for things to love to life.

We need to be collaborative with our Treasure Inside, rather than adversarial. We are in this together (us and our Treasure Inside), and we need to be friends, not enemies.

Life will only go well for you if you align yourself with God's description of spiritual reality. Loving yourself is one of the fundamental pillars upon which all of spiritual reality rests (Matthew 22:39). If you do not love yourself, destruction will be present in your life. Loving yourself is part of God's plan for you, and it is the only way that you can become all He has intended for you to be.

We have been looking inside ourselves for things to kill, instead of for things to love to life.

⁵ See Endnote # 18-2 for another view on loving yourself by John Eldredge from his book, Waking The Dead.