

### WHAT ABOUT SELF LOVE?

With so much material floating around on self love, self esteem, self acceptance, self identity, and self image, people are becoming too engrossed in themselves. When that happens (self getting magnified by all the attention) people only become more confused, selfishly self centered and proud. That is why Scripture tells us:

II Tim.3:1-2  
Matt.10:39  
Eph.5:28-29  
Gal.6:3  
Phil.2:21  
Phil.2:3-4

The issue of "loving ourselves" is not commanded by Jesus in Lk.10:25-27. Otherwise Jesus would have said there were three commands, not just "love God" and "love neighbor." In Lev.19:18, Matt.19:19, Rom.13:9, Gal.5:14, Eph.5:29, Js.2:8, where it says to "love your neighbor as yourself" it is always in the context of meeting another person's need above your self! The command literally implies that we should "treat" them the way you yourself would want to be treated if you were in their shoes! The same way you regard and seek your welfare - do the same for others. Unfortunately the way improper definitions of self love are spreading through churches today, if we would be consistent with these definitions and carry the implications to the end - Jesus Christ would have loved himself so much he never would have come to earth! Think about that for a minute. Something is wrong somewhere and it's not with the scriptural evidence.

Phil.2:1-8

Look back at the very context of where "self love" is said to be a prerequisite before loving others. Luke 10:29: This man had such a high view of himself already (self-centered) that he was trying to justify himself! He wasn't humbled or anywhere near having a "servant's heart." Jesus goes on with Luke 10:30-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan, and exposes three view points of life:

1. What's his is mine - I'm going to take it.
2. What's mine is my own - I'm going to keep it. (Rich young ruler)
3. What's mine is God's - I'm going to use it. (To meet other's needs)

If loving ourselves were commanded or even a prerequisite to loving others - the "others" would also include God! Observe:

I Jn.4:20-21

And if we couldn't love our neighbor before really loving self, how could we ever know (1) when we loved self enough? (There's a lot about "self" that won't be resolved until heaven)! Plus, if we couldn't love God and others before self how would we ever even (2) begin experiencing true love to begin with? Look at:

I Jn.4:19

Self certainly is not the place to start if we are honest with Scripture, so what is? The only way we can begin to love in any definition of the Word (scripturally) is to experience God's love first! We also need to see His examples of love in order to "love one another just as I have loved you" (Jesus Christ).

If anything is a prerequisite to loving others it is: (knowing HOW He's loved us)

Jn.13:31-35  
Jn.15:9

And most important - the only reason we are able to love (purely and righteously) is because "God first ... I Jn.4:19!

Look at what Paul said his motivation was for life and the ministry.

I Cor.5:14

Since "loving your neighbor as yourself" means loving them as you would want to be loved, carry it a little further to this application - we must love others the way we ourselves have already been loved by God! Because He has loved me in these ways (I Cor.13:4-8a), I can love others in the same manner. (Incidentally I Cor.13:4-8a would be pretty ridiculous to consistently apply to the concept of loving self!

Think about it: "I must not be jealous with myself!"? Verse 5 even says love does not seek its own! It's contradictory! Then to top it off, all these commands are others - related, not revolving around self. Because God is my source and example and He has treated me this way (even though others won't), I can experience a new motivation to love others. He must be my focus.

WHAT ABOUT SELF ACCEPTANCE?

Now "self acceptance" is a different story and I couldn't say any more than what Bill Gothard has already said in defining and resolving that area.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SELF IMAGE?

See my other study entitled, "How to Have A Biblically Accurate View of Yourself."