

Introduction

The Search for Significance: Seeing Your True Worth Through GOD'S EYES

Objective: You will be able to base your self-worth on the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and not on the world's standards, such as the approval of others or the ability to succeed at certain task.

Illustration:

Margie had called her mother to wish her a happy birthday. What started to be a pleasant conversation, however, suddenly turned sour. Instead of sounding happy that Margie called, she began to scold Margie for not visiting her often enough. Then when Margie related that her five-year-old son, Kevin, had a cough, Mom criticized Margie for not taking the child to the doctor sooner. She told Margie that if only she would insist that Kevin wear a sweater more often, he wouldn't get sick.

As tension mounted between mother and daughter, Margie quickly ended the conversation and hung up, absolutely furious at her mother for this turn of events. The Margie felt guilty about being angry at Mom. After all, it was Mom's birthday.

1. Have you ever known anyone in Margie's situation, or have you found yourself in a similar circumstance? One in which you felt as angry and discouraged as she did and blamed yourself? Explain or share if you like.
2. Any number of other situations can leave us feeling rejection, such as:
 - Loss of a job
 - Imprisonment
 - Feeling too busy
 - Feeling misunderstood
 - Death of a spouse
 - Living in poverty
 - Loneliness
 - Failure to achieve a goal
 - Physical or emotional abuse
 - Experiencing hurt easily
 - Experiencing frequent anger

Let's discuss the above:

3. If you can relate to any of these situations, and if you relate to any of the negative feelings that stem from them, then this class is for you! To help you accomplish the goal for the search you will learn some important things: **(Here's what is in it for you)**.

- **Four false beliefs:** about yourself that result in painful emotions affecting your self-worth.
- **The painful emotions or consequences:** resulting from the four false beliefs. We allow these beliefs and their related emotions to control our behavior in life situations.
- **Truths from God's Word:** the Bible, that help you reject the false beliefs. We may not be able to change the situations we encounter, for these situations will occur in our lives day after day. What we can change is what we think or believe about those situations. When we can change our focus, our emotions change as well. When we change our emotions, our behavior also can change.
- **The Holy Spirit's renewing of your mind:** to replace those false beliefs and the harmful emotional responses that often result.
- **Memorization of God's Word:** so you can hide God's truth in your heart and make it a part of your everyday life.
- **An affirmation:** or positive statement, based on God's truths. You can memorize "My Identity in Christ" (p.113) and use it to reject the false beliefs as they arise.
- **How to take a Trip In:** a process in which you get in touch with what really feel about a situation at times when you sense emotions could lead to destructive behavior. By identifying the emotion you feel, you learn to reject the false belief and then replace it with God's truth.

4. **Read Psalms 139:13 and write what the verse tells us about God's care for you:** _____

5. **Think about an individual to whom you turn when you need encouragement. Stop and thank God for this person's role in your life.**

The Search for Significance

Lesson #1a The Light Comes On

Objective: The goal of this lesson is to understand what causes trigger feelings and emotions that impact us negatively based on our view of ourselves apart from God's truth.

1. Below you will find words to help you understand this week's lessons:

- **Redemption:** (n.) Christ's delivering us from the curse of sin and death through His blood shed for us on the cross. He freed us from the guilt and power of sin. (*Example: Because of Christ's **redemption** I am a new creature of infinite worth.*)
- **Unconditional:** (adj.) with no strings attached; without limitation; absolute. (*Example: This week we study about God's **unconditional** love.*)

2. The purpose of this study is to help you build your self-worth on a biblical basis by helping you:

- Understand your own search for significance;
- Recognize and challenge Satan's lies;
- Apply God's truth to day-to-day life.

3. Try to remember an unpleasant situation you found yourself in recently. In the space below describe the situation briefly. What did you feel?

4. In the boxes beside these painful emotions, check any of the emotions you may have experienced recently.

- The fear of failure**
- Guilt**
- The fear of rejection**
- Shame**

5. **Read Romans 12:2 and explain how this verse aids in your emotional struggles. (Be specific): “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

6. **How does John 8:31-32 aid in your search and what message is designed for you to understand about this relationship with God: “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”**

7. **If you died today can you definitively say you will go to Heaven? If so or not, answer if God ask you why should I let you in Heaven, how would you respond?**

Because we are unaware of how wounded we actually are, we can't take steps toward healing and health. We lack objectivity (looking at ourselves as though we were another person) to see the reality of our pain, hurt, and anger. Why do some of us lack objectivity? Why are we afraid to turn on the lights and experience the truth?

The Search for Significance
Lesson #1b The Light Comes On

1. Define Self-Worth:

2. Two systems of self-worth. World System/ God's System
World System:

God's System:

- 5. It all started in the Garden. Genesis 2:25
Being naked means what:**

- 6. What changed and what are the results of the change?**

- 7. What stops us from Turning on the light?**

8. Underline the ways we block pain in the paragraph below:

We suppress painful emotions by driving ourselves to succeed; or we withdraw; say hurtful things to people who hurt us, and punish ourselves when we fail. Sometimes we think good Christians don't have problems or feelings like ours. We try to make clever statements so people will accept us; we help people so they will appreciate us; and we say and do countless other unfulfilling things.

Examples:

Turning on the Light

This false belief system distorts our understanding of who we truly are in Jesus Christ. These examples help us see a reality in many of our lives.

- a) Carl, an ambitious father, neglects his son, who grows up to take responsibility of running the company. Although Carl had said he was retired, he still shows up to work each day and meddles with every decision his son makes. The son assumes that his father doesn't trust him. *He's never trusted me. Maybe I'm just not trustworthy*, he concludes.

- b) Peggy, a **stay at home mother** with three children, painfully wonders, *Why don't I feel fulfilled as a homemaker?* She had thought children would fill the gaping hole in her life. Instead, her children were looking for affirmation from her. Sometimes it seemed she had little to give.

- c) James, a **pastor**, preaches powerfully about God's **unconditional** love. He feels he must succeed in his ministry, but he is withdrawn around his family. He never has understood how to apply his sermons to his life and relationships.

Discuss the above scenarios and exchange the main character and place yourself in the example.

The Search for Significance

Lesson #1c The Light Comes On: God Want Us to Be Real

Objective: The goal of this lessons is to learn to have courage to ask God to show us and teach us to allow the light of God to shine in our lives exposing the truth of our hearts.

1. Often times we mistakenly believe that God doesn't want us to be honest about our lives. We think He will be upset with us if we tell Him how we really feel (as though He doesn't know). But God tells is through the Scriptures that He does not want us to be shallow in our relationship with Him and others. Read John 17:21-22.

“ ... that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them that they may be one, just as We are one.”

How are these verses reflective in your present reality? (What does it mean for you today in your life)?

2. Ask God for guidance in the following areas. Underline the ones you will find most challenging.
 - a. To help me be honest with myself.
 - b. To help me think the way God thinks.
 - c. To help me deal with my feelings.
 - d. To know and apply God's truth to my life.
 - e. To find a person with whom I can share and who will pray for me.

3. Self-worth, often called self-esteem or personal significance, is a sense of self-respect and a feeling of satisfaction with who we are, True self-worth, unlike pride, is not based on our performance nor the opinions of others.

What is your opinion about yourself? Mark the following statements as T (true) or F (false).

1. I am glad I am who I am.
2. I often wish I were someone else.
3. I like my personality.
4. I have a healthy sense of self-worth.
5. I see changes which I need to make in my life.
6. I am eager to trust God for wisdom and the discipline to make these changes.

4. **Read Ephesians 1:3-14 in your Bible.** Check the statements that correctly describe what God already has done for you.

- 1. God has blessed you with every spiritual blessing.
- 2. God has punished you because of your failures.
- 3. God has declared you holy and blameless.
- 4. God has forgiven you.
- 5. God at times has condemned and rejected you.
- 6. God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit.

5. Remember, your feelings are not the basis of truth. God's Word is our authority. What it says is true, whether we feel it or not! Here are some statements that we have made thus far. **Underline the ones that are true.**

- We need help to see ourselves objectively.
- The Lord wants us to be honest with Him and ourselves.
- Failure will destroy a person who has a healthy self-concept.
- God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.
- God has chosen you, declared you holy and blameless, adopted you, redeemed you, and forgiven you.

6. Often times people wrestle with the basic questions, Who am I? and, Why am I here? Below write your thoughts on the answer you would give to these questions.

7. Read 1 John 1 1:9 and in your own words, make it personal. Rewrite it, using I, my, and me.

8. **Homework:** Listed below are examples of typical approval-seeking actions. Check the ones you can identify in your behavior.

- 1. I sometimes change my position on something or alter what I believe because someone shows signs that they disapprove of me.
- 2. In order to avoid someone's displeased reaction, I sometimes don't say what I mean.
- 3. I sometimes flatter people to make them like me.
- 4. I sometimes feel depressed or anxious when someone disagrees with me.
- 5. I sometimes apologize for myself-the excessive "I'm sorry" designed to have others forgive me and approve of me all the time.