

# Encouraging God-Esteem in a Culture of Self-Esteem

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*Our aim is not to take a child's low views of self and replace them with high views of self. Rather our aim is to take a child's low views of God and replace them with high views of God. Our aim is not to take a child with little sense of worth and fill him with a great sense of worth. Rather our aim is to take a child who by nature makes himself the center of the universe and show him that he was made to put God at the center of the universe and get joy not from seeing his own tiny worth, but from knowing Christ who is of infinite worth.*

*Sermon: Predestined for Adoption to the Praise of His Glory John Piper, June 20, 2004*

**This statement addresses an important issue that is prevalent in our culture, especially in our educational system, namely: the key to a child's success and happiness is, in large measure, determined by his favorable view of himself.**

**A contemporary definition of self-esteem and self-worth:**

**To have a high regard for yourself. To affirm your worth, attributes, and abilities, regardless of what others think: "I am the measure of my worth."**

**Premise: People who have a high self-esteem and self-worth will be more successful, confident, competent, and happy.**

**Does the above definition conform to Scripture? Is the premise true?**

**The biblical view of self:**

- We have been created by God, in His the image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27)
- We are totally dependent on God (Acts 17:25)
- Apart from God we can do nothing (John 15:5)
- All abilities we have are from God (1 Corinthians 4:7)
- We have been created for God's glory—to display His greatness and worth  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

**Furthermore:**

- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 1:21; 3:23)
- All deserve God's condemnation (Romans 6:23a)
- All have turned from God and have become worthless (Romans 3:12)

**The biblical view of self recognizes that God is the one who measures my worth.**

**Therefore, apart from Christ, this is the biblical view of self:**

**I have worth but I am worthless (bankrupt) in my standing before God**

**Q: What should be our response to this statement?**

**A: For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation. (2 Corinthians 7:10a)**

**Conclusion: The opposite of self-esteem and self-worth is not to feel badly about yourself, but to repent and turn to Jesus and embrace Him as your greatest Treasure.**

**The biblical view of self in Christ: If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation.**

**(1 Corinthians 5:17a)**

- **Because CHRIST lives in me—I now have WORTH through Him (Galatians 2:20)**
- **Because CHRIST died for me, I am now LOVED and ACCEPTED as a child of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1a)**
- **Because CHRIST has removed my guilt and shame, I now have PEACE (Romans 5:1)**
- **Because CHRIST has prepared good works for me, I now have PURPOSE (Eph. 2:10)**
- **Because CHRIST is for me, I now have CONFIDENCE (Romans 8:31)**
- **Because CHRIST is at work in me, I am now COMPETANT to do His will (Philippians 2:13; 4:13)**

**I have worth although I am not worthy. Christ is worthy!**

*Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. Revelation 4:11*

**How do we help guide our children away from self-esteem and self-worth toward God-esteem?**

## Examples of how we can encourage God-esteem in the classroom:

Celebrating birthdays:

Congratulations for Bible memory, etc.:

Recognizing special gifts and abilities:

Encouraging the shy or lonely child:

Other examples:

### Boasting and Pride

Psalm 34:2  
Proverbs 16:18  
Proverbs 29:23  
Jeremiah 9:23-24  
1 Corinthians 1:29-31  
1 Corinthians 4:7  
James 4:6

### Confidence

Joshua 1:9  
Psalm 46:1  
Isaiah 41:10  
Romans 8:28, 31  
Romans 8:37-39  
Philippians 1:6  
Hebrews 13:6

### Competence

Psalm 32:8  
2 Chronicles 16:19a  
Isaiah 40:28-29  
Philippians 2:13; 4:13  
Ephesians 6:10-18  
2 Timothy 3:16-17  
Hebrews 13:20-21

### Purpose

Jeremiah 29:11  
Matthew 5:14-16  
1 Corinthians 10:31  
Colossians 3:23-24  
Ephesians 2:8-10  
Ephesians 5:1-2b  
Philippians 3:14

### No Condemnation

John 3:17-18  
Romans 5:1, 9-11  
Romans 8:1, 34  
1 Peter 2:24-25

### Worth

Psalm 139:13-14  
Isaiah 43:1  
1 Corinthians 7:19-20  
Galatians 2:20  
Ephesians 1:3-5  
1 Peter 2:9-10

### Loved

Isaiah 40:11  
Psalm 103:11  
John 10:14-15  
Romans 5:8  
Romans 8:38-38  
1 John 4:9

### Repentance & Forgiveness

Luke 18:9-14  
Acts 3:19-20  
2 Peter 3:9  
1 John 1:9  
1 John 2:2