

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SELF-ESTEEM

### *Selected Scriptures*

### INTRODUCTION

So far, in our study of what the Bible says about conscience and guilt, we have concluded that when a person makes a morally correct choice, their conscience will produce within them a sense of joy that results in one experiencing a sense of satisfaction with oneself. When a person makes a morally wrong choice, their conscience will produce within them a sense of guilt and sorrow, resulting in one experiencing a sense of dissatisfaction with oneself. This sense of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with oneself is where we see this concept of self-esteem coming together.

### THIS WEEK:

This week's study will explore what the Bible says about self-esteem. Our culture presents self-esteem as something that should be pursued for a satisfied life. God, however, teaches us that it cannot be pursued directly and is instead a by-product of making morally right choices before God and others.

### OBSERVATION *What does it SAY?*

Discover key details of the passage by reading it and then answering the following questions:

1. One the earliest expression of low self esteem is found in Genesis 4:1-12. What differences do you see between the offering that Cain gave versus the offering that Abel gave? Why do you suppose God had no regard for Cain's offering (vv. 3-4)?
2. How did God respond to the offerings (v.4)?
3. How many expressions of low-self esteem can you find in this passage?
4. What specific perspectives, actions, and attitudes caused Abel's low self-esteem?

## **INTERPRETATION** *What does it MEAN?*

Use the Bible to interpret the Bible. Look up the cross references and use them to interpret the passage under study:

5. Read Mark 12:29-31. What are the two commands here? Based on these two commands, how would you define what sin is?
6. What assumption does v. 31 make about self-love? Is a lack of self-love man's problem here?
7. God describes his view of mankind in two very different ways.
  - a. How is God's view of man described in Psalm 14:1-3?
  - b. How is God's view of man described in Psalm 8:3-2?
  - c. How do we best reconcile these two very different accounts of God's view of us?
8. How should these very different realities about us shape our self-image, self-love, and self-esteem (Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:2-4)?

## **APPLICATION** *Why does it MATTER?*

Now that you have discerned what the passage means, how does it apply to your life?

9. What are some of the signs that a person with poor self-esteem might express?

10. What happens to your self esteem when you pursue self-love instead of love for God and love for others? Do you feel better about yourself? Why or why not?
11. What impact does God's view of you shape how you view yourself? In what way is not embracing God view of you an expression of a lack of love towards God?
12. According to this study, a lack of love towards God and a lack of love towards others is the cause of having poor self-esteem. We cannot improve our self-esteem by loving ourselves more because loving ourselves too much is already the problem. What is the only hope we have of having good self-esteem?

**TAKE AWAY** *How does this change me?*

15. What does this passage reveal about God?
16. What does this passage reveal about humanity?
17. What is the Holy Spirit revealing in this passage about your life?

**Have your kids do the word find puzzle on the next page or read to them Genesis 4:1-9. Use the following questions to have a discussion about how disobeying God makes us sad.**

1. Who are the two brothers mentioned in Genesis 4:1-9, and what did each of them do for work?
2. What did Cain and Abel each bring as an offering to God, and how did God feel about their offerings?
3. What did Cain do after God was pleased with Abel's offering but not with his?
4. In Hebrews 11:4, it talks about Abel's offering. Why do you think Abel's offering was better than Cain's?
5. In 1 John 3:12, it mentions Cain and Abel again. What does it say about why Cain did what he did to Abel?
6. Have you ever felt jealous of someone like Cain felt jealous of Abel? What can you do when you feel that way?
7. How can you show kindness and love to your family and friends, even when you feel upset or angry?
8. If you were able to talk to Cain before he got angry with Abel, what would you say to help him make a better choice?

# WORD FIND

Genesis 4:1-9

B R I C A I N F I E L D  
F L L E C S P O L F A P  
M F H B W O R K T H B L  
S A I D C M T H E N E O  
H F R F B E C A M E L R  
E L I U B R O T H E R D  
L O G R O U N D D B N R  
P C H I L D C O U R S E  
B K T O F F E R I N G G  
L G P U G B I R T H B A  
O A L S O T V L O O K R  
O V P R E S E N T E D D  
D E S P O N D E N T E R

The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she **conceived** and **gave birth** to **Cain**. She **said**, “I have had a male **child** with the **LORD’s help**.” She **also gave birth** to his **brother Abel**. Now **Abel became** a shepherd of **flocks**, but **Cain worked** the **ground**. In the **course** of time **Cain presented some** of the land’s produce as an **offering** to the **LORD**. And **Abel also presented** an **offering**—**some** of the firstborn of his **flock** and their fat portions. The **LORD** had **regard** for **Abel** and his **offering**, but he did not have **regard** for **Cain** and his **offering**. **Cain** was **furious**, and he **looked despondent**. **Then** the **LORD said** to **Cain**, “Why are you **furious**? And why do you **look despondent**? If you do what is **right**, won’t you be accepted? But if you do not do what is **right**, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” **Cain said** to his **brother Abel**, “Let’s go out to the **field**.” And while they were in the **field**, **Cain** attacked his **brother Abel** and killed him. **Then** the **LORD said** to **Cain**, “Where is your **brother Abel**?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my **brother’s** guardian?”