

February 12, 2023

Focus On Self

by Rickie Jenkins

Confidence is a compound word: “con” - meaning “with,” and “fidence” meaning - “trust, faith.” The word confidence is derived from its Latin roots to be defined as “with trust,” or “with faith,” or “with belief.” Put the word confidence with the suffix “self” and it would be “with trust in self,” “with faith in self,” “with belief in self.” Self-confidence is something all cherish. Self-confidence and self-worth are related.

But someone asks, “What if I grow up ordinary?” So, we fix our self-worth with being impressive. Then, because self-worth falters, self-confidence also fades. Low self-worth, low self-confidence, and then low self-esteem: The unrelenting pain of judging ourselves. We don’t need anyone else to tell us how worthless we are. We tell ourselves that all the time. The treadmill is endless trying to prove self-worth through accomplishment or external approval.

Cultural messages we absorb tell us we must be great at everything and look good while doing it. When we fall short, and we will, we are crushed and disappointed. Over time, we give up. Self-esteem that comes from performance or approval from others is fragile. It is built on a shaky focus. The cultural message we absorb goes something like this: “If we are athletic, we are somebody; if we are good looking, we are somebody; if

we are intelligent, we are somebody.” But what if we are clumsy, ugly, dull and dumb, can we be somebody? Sorry, we’re out. This cultural message is old and repeated throughout history.

To counter this cultural message, we try to build each other up through praise. It’s important to tell someone how great they are. But the combination of failing then having someone tell you how great you are, can cause self-loathing. Feelings of ineptitude increase. Instead, consider turning off the self-focus. Forget self and realize we’re not the center of the universe. We can change our self-criticism by focusing on ourselves less. Have you ever been at a gathering and laughed so hard, you had that “belly-laugh”? In that moment, the focus was not on ourselves. We were not self-conscious. We let go.

So, maybe the problem is not altogether about self-confidence, but focusing on ourselves too much. Maybe that is why the Lord said in order to follow Him, we must deny ourselves. As Christians, we must take the focus off of ourselves and place it on Him.

I don’t know about you, but my greatest challenge is to keep my mind off of myself, and on the Lord, serving Him. If I listen to Him, I am more at peace.

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Our Gospel Meeting with Bubba Garner - April 2-5

Gospel Meeting - San Marcos, March 3-5

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

The Gospel of Grace

by George Slover

“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:1-3)

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas continued boldly proclaiming the message of the cross. Throughout this journey, the gospel was received in two ways. In Iconium it was no different.

Paul and Barnabas declared the gospel of God's grace in the synagogue of the Jews. They urged the truth with fearless vigor. Their confidence was grounded in God's presence and support. This bold proclamation was backed by signs and wonders which proved the authenticity of the message.

When the gospel is preached in its simplicity and power it gets results. This was certainly the case in this city of Asia Minor. A multitude of Jews and Greeks received the gospel. When the seed is planted, God gives the increase. There is no greater joy to the sincere teacher than to witness a harvest of souls.

This passage also reminds us of the pain of rejection. The unbelieving Jews “poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers”. Like adding arsenic to water these false teachers tainted the truth with error. Thus, the city was divided – some siding with the believers and others siding with the unbelievers! Such opposition grieves the heart of Christian teachers.

Today, the powerful gospel will get

the same results. Some will receive it. Others will reject it. However, the soldier of Christ must prove faithful, ready to encounter the contempt, or the ridicule, or the slander of the evil minded, so long as there is any good to accomplish by his steadfastness.

Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing treatments to strengthen his immune system. He is having some tests run for his lungs.

Dinah Williams continues to have mobility issues.

Don Simmons is home and still struggling with his breathing; he is on oxygen at all times. **Alene** is having hip issues.

Randall Vanaman is having difficulties with his feet.

Doug Adair is preparing to have surgery on his back

Debbie McMurray's father passed away.

Dinah Williams is having cataracts removed in April.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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