

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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SELF-ESTEEM AGENDA

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If you were to ask people to point out a root problem for societal ills today, the lack of self-esteem will be the answer from many. The root concept in esteem is “value”. In the opinion of many, one unable to sense his or her personal value leads to the self-destructive habits of drug and alcohol consumption. Drugs and alcohol deaden the mental pain, at least for a moment, of not seeing any personal value in one’s self. A person growing old with a painful, debilitating illness may interpret growing limitations as a life with no value. In such a depressed state, the person may court suicide as his or her only viable alternative. Some standing by will quickly assist, but soften the harshness by calling it euthanasia.

Because many perceive the lack of self-esteem as a major problem today, they believe our preaching and teaching should be aimed at solving this problem. Building up self-esteem becomes a conscious goal. Then, hearers are inundated with the “God Don’t Make No Junk” sermons.

Why would any servant of the Lord have any problem with

this agenda?

First, that which heads the list of “things to be done” is “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2), not build up self-esteem. Where do we read of the Lord calling his apostles in for a conference and articulate building up self-esteem as a conscious goal?

This is the same problem we have today with those who advocate “positive preaching”. Such is not the Lord’s agenda. His agenda is *preach the word*. This will demand the preaching of the word in the form of “rebuke”, during an “out of season time” when “ears” are in the process of “turning aside from the truth”. If “positive preaching” has replaced the clear agenda of the Lord of “preach the word”, how many in this group of “itching ears” will think the preacher is being faithful to the Lord? False agenda’s encourage imbalanced preaching. This is not valuable to anyone.

Second, Some interpret building self esteem as “make me feel good about myself.” Self-value to such a person means to focus only on my good traits and my good deeds. With such an

agenda, the preacher who preaches the word will be in trouble. How do you grade Peter in the arena of “feel good” advocates as he pricks the hearts of the Jews with their sin of crucifying Jesus (Acts 2:37)?

Third, self-esteem is closely related to self-love in the minds of many. God sees this as a potential problem in man’s relationship with Him. It is not the lack of self-love that is the problem, but too much of it in man’s heart. Grievous times in the Bible is not when people do not have self-esteem, but being “lovers of self” they seek gratifying “pleasure” and have no room in their heart to be “lovers’ of God” (2 Timothy 3:2,4).

If not valuing self is the problem, preaching the word with its basis of “God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son...” should surely cause one to see that God values him or her. Then, “self respect” needs to replace “self esteem” in our thinking, for this will encourage changing bad traits instead of the “feel good” way of ignoring them.