

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Self-Love

(Jerry Fite)

Is loving self a sin? Should a Christian eliminate the love of self from his or her thinking?

Answering these questions may be a little tricky. But relying on the principle that truth harmonizes in all circumstances, we can answer these inquiries for ourselves Scripturally.

Loving self was one of two fastening nails upon which hung the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Jesus reminded his questioners, as they tested Him regarding the greatest commandment, the great and first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. The second commandment is to “*love thy neighbor as thyself*” adding, “*on these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets*” (Matthew 22:37-40). Paul reminds the Christians in Rome that the section of the Law dealing with one’s relationship with man “*is summed up in this word, namely, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’*” (Romans 13:9). James encourages Christians that when they “*fulfill the royal law...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well*” (James 2:8). If we do well in carrying out the Lord’s command to love our neighbor as ourselves, must we not maintain a love for self?

A husband’s self-love is essential for maintaining a healthy relationship with his wife. Paul connects the Lord’s perspective of His body, the church, with the husband’s attitude toward his wife. He exhorts, “*Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church*” (Ephesians 5:28-29).

If a Christian does not have a healthy love for self, how will he or she relate compassionately with others? How will a husband relate positively in his care and protection of his own wife if he does not have a healthy love for self in caring for his own body? Surely, we can see that God demands the Christian to maintain a sound love for self in his or her walk with Christ.

While the love of self should be securely rooted within us, we must guard against it succumbing to “selfish root rot.” We must continually apply a healthy dose of “loving God first,” allowing it to absorb into our hearts. This encourages a healthy root system characterized as “not my will, but Thy will be done.” Self-love flourishes in responding

compassionately and helpfully when loving God first surrounds the root of self-love.

Paul warns us grievous times will occur when people are “*lovers of self*” (2 Timothy 3:2). These are the times when self-love spreads without a godly perspective. A perverted self-absorbed perspective crowds out a healthy self-love. The priority of being “*lovers of God*” is sadly absent. People are not lovers of God but “*lovers of pleasure*” and “*lovers of money*” instead (2 Timothy 3:2,4). Ungodly self-absorption issues into “*boastful*” “*haughty*” and “*unthankful*” people who believe all others exist to praise and admire them. Woe to the poor soul who doesn’t feed the self-absorbed cravings, the lover of self will betray you as a “*traitor*” and discard you in “*slander*” (2 Timothy 3:3). This “*implacable*” (2 Timothy 3:4) headstrong “my way or the highway” lover of self will not generate healthy relationships.

When the love for God is absent in the heart, worldly self-absorbed living will arise. Loving others as you love yourself is Scriptural. Make sure your self-love is rooted first in the love of God!