

QUIET TIME

Theme: Self-esteem

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

- Day 1 Psalm 139:13-18
This is how God made you
- Day 2 Isaiah 43:1-7
This is how God thinks and feels about you
- Day 3 Jeremiah 17:5-8
This is how God makes you into a blossoming tree
- Day 4 Jeremiah 29:11-14
This is what God says about your future
- Day 5^{BS} Colossians 3:10-17
This is how God changes you permanently (cf. Colossians 3:23-24)
- Day 6 Matthew 6:25-34
This is how you can stop worrying
- Day 7 Psalm 103:1-14
This is all that God gives to you
- Day 8 Psalm 37:1-11
Do this and God will give you the desires of your heart
- Day 9 Romans 12:3-8
Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought
- Day 10 Romans 12:9-18
This is how you give others a healthy self esteem
- Think about Ephesians 3:20. God can, will and shall change you to become more Christ like. He can, will and shall do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.
 - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: How to develop a healthy self-esteem

Read study 48 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: God can change your self-esteem permanently

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Colossians 3:10-17,23-24**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

SELF ESTEEM

Isaiah 43:4

Since you are precious and honoured in my sight,
and because I love you,
I will give men in exchange for you,
and people in exchange for your life.

Isaiah 43:4(NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

48. How to develop a healthy self-esteem

Your self-esteem is determined by how you view and value yourself. Many people think: "I don't like myself" or "My life has no value". How valuable do you regard yourself? Do you have a positive or negative opinion about yourself? Do you feel inferior or superior in the presence of other people? Do you sometimes think that your life is meaningless? What does the Bible teach about self-esteem?"

A. Focus on Jesus Christ

Your self-esteem is determined by your focus on either other people or Jesus Christ. The illustration shows how someone develops a negative self-esteem (numbers 1-3) and how he can change this to a positive self-esteem (numbers 4-7).

1 You focus on and compare yourself to someone else or to your own ideal self-image.

When you compare yourself to another person, you may have negative thoughts, feelings about him and negative reactions towards him.

You feel that you are worse (inferior),
OR better (superior) than the other person.
You don't like yourself,
OR you don't like the other.

You are dissatisfied about how God has made you and despise yourself,
OR you brag about yourself, your possessions and accomplishments and look down upon the other.
You fear what the other thinks about you,
OR you don't care what he thinks about you.
You are critical about your own shortcomings and condemn yourself,
OR you are critical about the other's shortcomings and condemn him.

You avoid the other because you do not want to be hurt by him,
OR you are insensitive and tactless towards the other and you couldn't care whether he feels hurt or rejected.
You always try to please the other so that he will accept you,
OR you are authoritarian and expect that everyone else should please you.

2 Everytime you focus on the other person you think and feel more negative about yourself and react more negatively towards the other.

Every time you compare yourself to the other person, you strengthen this negative process. You think and

feel more and more negative about yourself and react more and more negative to him. You feel less and less safe and valuable and life seems more and more insignificant,
OR you become more and more arrogant and rude in your speech and behaviour.
This downward spiral can continue for years!

3 You (your personality and character) becomes exactly like you think, feel and behave.

Read Galatians 6:7-8. Which biblical principle forms your character?

When you continually sow certain thoughts, feelings and reactions in your life, you finally reap a character like what you have been sowing.

When you continually sow inferior thoughts, feelings and reactions in your life, you finally reap an inferior personality and character. You have an inferior character, despise yourself and fear other people. Then you have developed a low self-esteem based on lies.

OR: when you continually sow overrated and proud thoughts, feelings and reactions in your life, you reap an arrogant, rude, insensitive and repulsive personality and character. You think yourself elevated above other people, despise them and dominate them. Then you have developed a blown-up self-esteem based on other lies.

4 How do you change this process? Let go of your old focus and concentrate no longer on

other people or your ideal self.

Read 1 John 1:8-9. How do you stop your old focus?

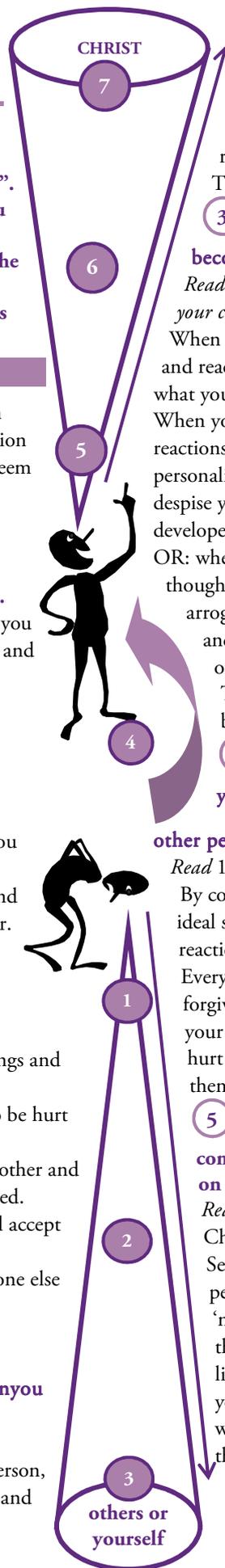
By comparing yourself with other people or with your ideal self-image, many negative thoughts, feelings and reactions occur which the Bible calls 'sin'!

Every time you confess your sin to God and accept his forgiveness and cleansing, you are set free to change your wrong focus! When other people or events have hurt you in the past, you need to face them and bring them to Christ for healing.

5 Turn your eyes on your new focus and concentrate your thoughts, feelings and reactions on CHRIST.

Read Colossians 3:1-4,23-24. What should a Christian's focus be? On whom must he focus?

Set your heart no longer on this sinful world and its people. Do not regard them any longer as 'ideal' or 'normal'. Set your heart on Jesus Christ and the things above. Make Jesus Christ the focus of your life. You live and work for Jesus Christ, because you already know that you are destined to appear with him in glory and inherit together with him the eternal inheritance.



6 Invest in spiritual growth, which causes your self-esteem to increase.

Read Isaiah 43:4 and Jeremiah 29:11. How does God view you? What is your value in his eyes?

You are precious in his eyes! God honours you and loves you! God has planned a hopeful future and significant life for you! When you continually focus on and accept God's thoughts about you, your self-esteem will become positive.

Read Colossians 2:6-7. What can you do to grow spiritually?

Get rooted in Christ and get built up in Christ. 'Roots' are invisible under the ground and represent your hidden relationship with Jesus Christ through quiet time and prayer. 'The building' is very visible above the ground and represents the visible progress of your Christian life through discipleship training. You will believe that you are completely secure and significant in Jesus Christ. You will be absolutely convinced that God loves you unconditionally and that your life is very significant in his eyes!

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. How can others help you to grow spiritually?

By regularly meeting with a small group of Christians, your love for God and for one another will deepen and your tasks in life will have eternal influence.

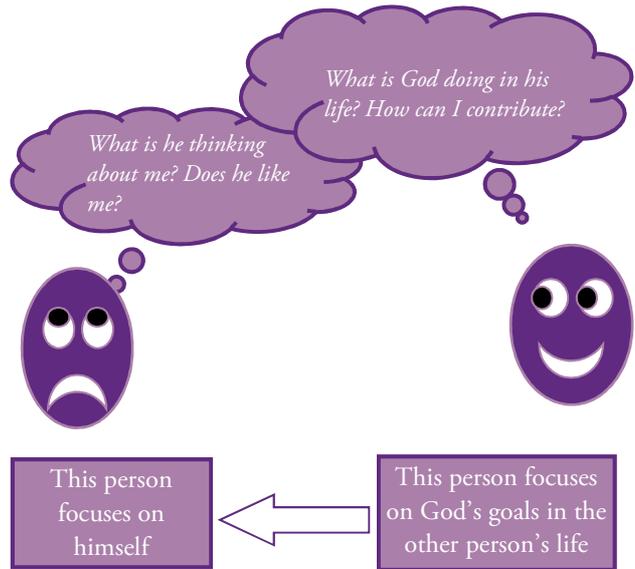
7 You (your personality and character) will become more and more Christ like!

Read Ephesians 5:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. How do you become more Christ like?

By following Jesus Christ and by living a life of love (for God, others and yourself); and by focussing on Jesus Christ and reflecting him in the mirror of your life, you will become more and more like Jesus Christ.

Conclusion. Do not compare yourself with other people or with your ideal self-image, but direct your thoughts, feelings and reactions to Jesus Christ!

B. Focus of God's goals (intentions)



Read *Philippians 2:3-5,20-21*. What does God say that you must do?

God instructs you to focus on his goals (objectives, intentions) in the other person's life and not to occupy yourself with your own interests. When you meet another person note whether you are occupied with what the other person thinks about you or whether you are occupied with what God wants to accomplish in the other person's life.

Every person will now and then be occupied with his own problems and hurt feelings. Then it is good to receive the attention and love from the other person. Only when you yourself are free you are able to give yourself to another person.

Conclusion

Focus on God's goals (objectives, intentions) in other peoples' lives.

C. Focus on God's truths

1. You are very special in God's eyes!

Read Psalm 139:13-18. How special did God make you? Think for example about how God made your eyes, ears, tongue, hands and skin. Consider the functions of the human spirit that enables you to know and communicate with God. Think about your conscience that enables you to distinguish good from evil. Consider your intuition that enables you to detect danger or lies. And think about your creativity that enables you to invent and make new things.

What do you like or not like about how God made you? How do you react to this?

When you do not like how God created you, you begin to be suspicious towards God. But when you accept how God created you, your trust in God will grow!

2. You will never lack any real good thing!

Read Psalm 16:2; 23:1; 34:10. *What do you think you lack in life? How do you react towards that?*

Think about the way you respond to your shortcomings and weaknesses. Are you trying to compensate the deficiency (for example: insecurity) by one of the following devices: fleeing from it, covering it up (hiding it), exaggerating the opposite, lying about it, working very hard to avoid detection, becoming addicted to a medicine, going on a buying spree or giving in to peer pressure? Instead of trying to compensate your shortcomings and weaknesses by these above-mentioned devices, meet them by spiritual means: pray to God about it, praise him for being sovereign, thank him for his promises, be content with what he gives, and submit to his perfect will. When you focus on 'who you are in Jesus Christ' and 'what you have in Jesus Christ', the proper issues will receive attention in your life. By continuing to focus on 'what you think you lack', the wrong things get too much attention.

3. You do not need people or things to jack up your self-esteem!

Read Galatians 1:10; Jeremiah 17:5-8.

What are you doing to get accepted by other people?

Do you give in to peer-pressure? Do you always try to please your friends? Do you dress in a particular way in order to belong to the group? Do you buy the latest expensive gadgets in order to communicate with others? Or do you avoid contact with other people at meetings?

When you are continually focussed on acceptance by other people, you hinder bearing fruit in their lives or having special influence on them. Such reactions hinder you from serving them. You cannot serve Jesus Christ when you love other people for the wrong reasons. But when you are sincere in who you are and what you do, you are free to serve Jesus Christ and bear fruit in other peoples' lives (Psalm 36:8-10; John 7:37-39; 15:5,7-8).

Conclusion

Focus on God's truths and values in the Bible.

D. Memorise the following Bible verses

Change your thinking

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Sow on the field of the Spirit

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Focus of what is above

Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Reflect the glory of the Lord

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

You are precious in God's eyes

Isaiah 43:4

Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.

You have a significant future

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Memorising Scripture verses is a very good method to transform your thinking about your self-esteem.