



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 7

October 11, 2020

No. 41

Would You Pray that Prayer?

Jonathan Banning

In Psalm 7, David makes a shocking petition to God. "O LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is injustice in my hands... let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it; and let him trample my life down to the ground and lay my glory in the dust" (7:3-5).

That's the plea of someone with a clean conscience. Only a man who knew he was innocent would pray such a bold prayer. Some prayers are so straightforward and honest that they can only be prayed by a heart that's right in the sight of God. Maybe there's something we can learn from the prayers we *aren't* willing to pray. For instance, are you willing to pray...

"Examine me, O Lord" (Psa 26:2). David is inviting spiritual inspection, confessing he has nothing to hide. Do you know who gets worried about tests? Those who aren't prepared. What about you? Can you invite the Lord to examine your life, even looking forward to the test because you know you're prepared?

"Make me know your ways, O Lord" (Psa 25:4). David wants the truth, no matter what it may require of him. Sometimes we think ignorance is bliss. Sometimes, when we're guilty, we'd rather not know. What about you? Do you want to know what you need to fix, how you can grow, what to improve, whatever the cost?

"Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20). This prayer lays my heart bare. It's the ultimate tool in determining whether my conscience is clean. What about you? Is your heart right with God? Are you ready, even *anxious* for the Lord to come right now?

Can you pray those prayers with a conscience cleansed by the blood of Jesus? If not, why not do something about it today?

Self Esteem

- by Keith Sharp

The foundation for the life of the Christian is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). We must indeed believe He is the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24; 20:30-31), and that faith must lead us to obey Him (Matthew 7:21-27; Luke 6:46) and to pattern our lives after Him (Luke 6:40). And what kind of example did He leave for us to follow?

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

The mind of Christ we must emulate is humility, and the life of Christ we must follow is one of self sacrifice in order to obey God and to serve others.

Experts tell us that “self esteem” “refers to an individual’s sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself. The person with “high self esteem” “values, approves of, appreciates, prizes” himself. But, if we follow Christ, we do nothing through conceit but “esteem others better than” ourselves.

John Rosemond, a professional family psychologist who writes a nationally syndicated column wrote an article entitled “Self-Esteem Isn’t Praiseworthy Goal.” He cited “an extensive study” “by professor Roy Baumeister of Case Western Reserve University which concluded, not surprisingly, “that people with high self esteem tend to have low self-control.” For example, he has discovered that criminals do not suffer from low self esteem. Mr. Rosemond referenced a second study published in the November 2001 issue of “Personality and Social Psychology Review” which indicates “while self-esteem among America’s youth has been on the rise for the past 30 years, accomplishment and responsible decision-making have been on the decline.”

The apostle Paul warned Timothy of “perilous times” during which people would be “lovers of themselves,... boasters, proud,... disobedient to parents,... without self- control, brutal,... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Hmmm. We’re in perilous times indeed, aren’t we?

Thayer defines the word “proud” as “showing one’s self above others, with an overwhelming estimate of one’s means or merits, despising others or even treating them with contempt, haughty”. Would someone please explain to me the difference between self esteem and pride? I have been unable to find a single passage of Scripture that commends pride in oneself.

The apostle characterizes sinners in these “perilous times” as “having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:5), i.e., claiming to be reverent toward God while remaining worldly in heart and life. Thus, churches which have bought in to this ‘self esteem movement’ are appealing to worldly folks because they offer “a form of godliness” (outward show of reverence for God) but deny its power (no real change of heart and life). It’s the easy, broad way that leads to destruction rather than eternal life (Matthew 7:13-14).

The greatest and universal human need is salvation from sin. The “whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19; cf. Matthew 9:36-38; Romans 3:23; 6:23). Our job is not to make lost sinners feel good about themselves in their sins. We must get them to see they are spiritually “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17) (By the way, the Lord Jesus was here describing sinful Christians who had very high self esteem).

Instead of artificially elevating their ‘self esteem,’ we need to point lost sinners to “Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42), so they can be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Thus “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard” their “hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7), and they will “rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8) in the hope of heaven. And that’s what the gospel and the church of our Lord Jesus Christ are all about.

Electronic Beacon 9/29 *(edited for length)*