

# Biblical Self Love: Loving Yourself

**SCRIPTURES** – Scriptures are dispersed all throughout the lesson.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Believe it or not, loving oneself is one of the hardest things one could ever learn to do. Listen to what Jesus says in **Matthew 22:36-40**,

*“<sup>36</sup>Master, which is the great commandment in the law? <sup>37</sup>Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*

Notice how Jesus says the greatest commandment of all is to “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Second to this is and “equally important” says the NLT is to “**Love your** neighbor as **yourself**.”

Take a look at “second”. It means duo in Greek.

<http://biblehub.com/greek/1208.htm>

Once we learn to love God with all our heart, only then can we learn and grow to love our neighbor as [and] ourselves. You know what’s profound about this is that the better you love yourself, the better you love others; and the more you love God and experience His love the easier it becomes to love yourself and in turn love others.

I want to focus on the loving of “ourselves” in this command that Jesus gives in the text. [Which is second to the first.] It’s amazing to me that in spite of the country we live in and the number of opportunities, amenities, pleasures, resources, liberties and the multitude of testimonies and stories of success we have all around us that suicide is still a formidable demonic spirit that controls, rules and in many cases, conquers the lives of many in this country.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention provides the following statistics on their website:<sup>1</sup>

- 1.) Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the US
- 2.) 44,193 Americans die of suicide each year (more than die from gun shots which is around 33,000). This is 15,000 more victims than handgun deaths
- 3.) For every successful suicide, there’s 25 attempts; or 1 out of 25 attempts are successful.
- 4.) There are 121 suicides a day on average or 5 suicides per hour (40 deaths in an 8 hr. day)
- 5.) Men die from suicide almost 4x’s more than women
- 6.) Suicide rates have gone up
- 7.) The US is ranked 48 amongst nations in suicide rates per 100,000 people (in front of 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries like Rwanda, Congo, Senegal, Croatia, Switzerland, Cuba, Haiti, Australia, Canada, etc.)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suicide Statistics. <https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/>

<sup>2</sup> List of Countries by Suicide Rate. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_suicide\\_rate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_suicide_rate)

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What is self-love? How do we truly grow to love ourselves? What does the Bible say about self-love? How can self-love help us in fully and completely loving God with all our heart? Some people are insecure about themselves and act out because they don't love themselves.

## NOTES

What is self-love? Let's break each word down first. *Self* is you. You are made up of physical, mental and spiritual beings (also known as our soul). *Love* is accepting, forgiving, and looking beyond the surface and seeing despite what you can see with your natural eyes you understand this is who you are and except God changes certain things about you this is who you'll need to become comfortable with.

When I think of self-love my mind goes to the next greatest love Scripture of all, behind **Matthew 22:36-40**, and that's **1 Corinthians 13**. How many times in the first few verses do you find the singular pronoun 'I'? I see it at least 8 times in the first 3 verses. Love, or charity as you will find it called in some translations, is not "just" about what you can do for others or all about the gifts and talents you have that make you stand out and so helpful to others. Just to be clear, we're talking about spiritual gifts here which makes this Scripture so powerful and profound. God really isn't concerned about how many godly acts or things we do. It's not these things that define our love for Him, others or even ourselves. What? What do I mean? Look at verse 9. Paul says, all these things "will become useless."

Read verse 4-8 though. This is where we begin to go beneath the God given spiritual gifts and talents, and now we begin to focus on us and the importance of true, proper love. What does it mean to love yourself? What is true love? There are 15 things love is and love is not according to this Scripture. Make note of them and ask yourself, which love attributes do I need to work on? The below characteristics are grouped Positive & Negative grouped love attributes.

- 1.) Patient
- 2.) Kind
- 3.) Rejoices when truth wins out
- 4.) Always hopeful
- 5.) Endures through every circumstance
- 6.) Not jealous
- 7.) Not boastful
- 8.) Not proud
- 9.) Not rude
- 10.) Not demanding (Doesn't demand its own way)
- 11.) Not irritable
- 12.) Not record keeping (Keeps no record of wrong)
- 13.) Doesn't rejoice in injustices
- 14.) Never gives up
- 15.) Never loses faith

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I want to leave you with the words of the Apostle Paul. In verse 8b Paul says, “But love will last forever!”

Love is the greatest virtue of all and has survived the test of time from the beginning of God’s creation until the end. See **Ephesians 3:8-21**.

Without it, life as we know it will perish. Without self-love, we perish; and is why so many people in this country have attempted and succeeded in killing themselves.

Praise be to God that we have something to live for and strive for! This is the love of our God and in many folk’s cases the love of oneself.

**Proverbs 19:8** (NIV) says, “The one who gets wisdom loves life; the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper.” When we love ourselves we pursue wisdom, and who is the beginning and end of wisdom? God is. To be more precise the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom as we know it.

After reading this Scripture, I can’t help but think about **Proverbs 4:1-7** and **9:10**. If wisdom is the key to us loving life, then the next logical question is how do we get wisdom? If you want to learn and grow to love your God and yourself more, this is what you need to know.

Wisdom begins with a healthy, sincere and genuine reverence and respect for our God. One who desires true wisdom also desires to understand, learn and know their God. This individual seeks out their God and looks for opportunities to grow closer to their God. As we receive the wisdom of God we grow in the love of ourselves and our lives (regardless of how jacked up, messed up and tore up they are). When Christ is our priority, we aren’t consumed by our flaws or imperfections, nor are we overtaken by our downfalls. When Christ is our priority, every time our sinful, imperfect selves, and hang-ups cross our minds, the power, love, wisdom and nature of God overtakes it and pushes it out of our presence.

This reminds me of **Psalms 139:13-15**. We must never forget about how meticulously and carefully God made each one of us. The Devil desires and wants us to believe that God messed up when He created us, or that we can never live up to God’s standards. The Devil wants us to believe a lie which in turn hinders our spiritual growth and movement towards Christ. God on the other hands wants to constantly remind us of how special, unique and wonderful everything about us is.

It’s amazing at how a lack of or low self-love has an adverse affect on self-confidence and courage. You show me a person who walks in fear, battles fear or lives in fear and I’ll show you a person who doesn’t love themselves or has no self-worth.

God desires us to understand the value of our self-worth in His eyes and according to His word. Every now and then we have to do what the writer of the Song of Solomon 4:7 does, “You are

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altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you.” We have to remind ourselves of what the Word of God says about us; and the Word of God doesn’t lie! Look at also Ephesians 2:10. Whose workmanship are we? God’s! God created us inside of Christ Jesus. This means He recreated us; or He made us brand new!

Let’s take a look at **Ephesians 5:29**. We are called to nourish and cherish our own bodies, just as Christ does the church. If we stop and think about the act of God in our lives and throughout history.

We’ll see now only how much love God has for us or His Son Jesus Christ, but how much He even loves himself. Since God created all things, He’s in all things and therefore expressed His divine love for Himself through the greatest act of all – Redemption through Christ!

As I prepare to close, I want to bring your attention to **2 Corinthians 12:9**. I truly believe that Paul had a problem with self-love, or with loving himself. It is evident in this Scripture. There were some things about himself that Paul obviously asked God to remove or quite possibly even deliver him from. The Scripture doesn’t say exactly what it was, but what we do learn is that God did not remove these things (or thing) and instead told Paul to rest in His all sufficient grace. It is in our weaknesses, or the things we feel like if God just changes, removes or take away from us will make us so much better Believers, Christians, Fathers, Sons or overall individuals. You know what God says about this, “Love yourself. Stop allowing your weaknesses and infirmities to consume your every awakening thought and action. Instead, rely more on my strength and rest in my all sufficient grace.”

## CONCLUSION

Anything worth having is worth working for and anything worth keeping is worth waiting for. Our lives, mission and purpose is too great to allow how we see and view ourselves to get in the way of fulfilling our divine call. I truly believe that’s why Paul said what he said over in 1 Timothy 4:6-10 about physical training vs spiritual. We’ve all been through the ups and downs of physical training and sacrifice. It feels like sometime no matter how hard we work, we still don’t get or end up with the results we’re looking for (at least long-term). The older we get the harder our body fights against the physical training; however, it’s the opposite with the Spirit. The more spiritual training we get and the longer we do it and older we get, the stronger, wiser, and better we get. We should all take care of our physical vessels, but don’t think physical care is the key to achieving a positive physical image of yourself.

Term of the day is **Demonstrative**.