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SELF-ESTEEM ARE WE REALLY BETTER THAN WE THINK?

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about how to counsel a person who complains of low self-esteem.

Archie, a bi-vocational pastor, sought counseling. At the first session, he gave a synopsis of his problem:

Archie said his whole life had been one problem after another. His parents divorced when he was 10 years old. His father verbally abused both him and his mother. He never had many friends in school and felt lonely. Archie thought things would get better after he got married, but said things have not changed very much. Unfortunately, Archie said, he and his wife have been having marital problems for the past six years. Archie maintained he has always felt inferior. He had no self-esteem. He asked how he could expect anyone to love him if he didn't love himself. Archie said he needed to learn to love himself so he could have normal relationships and a happy life.

Like so many people today, Archie believes he is better than he thinks. Dozens of beloved Christian authors assure Archie that the haunting feelings of guilt, shame, unworthiness, and not being “enough” are false. They assure Archie that he is competent, adequate, and special, worthy of Christ dying for him, significant and okay. But is Archie really better than he thinks?

Archie's account said a lot about what he believes regarding the nature of man.

Archie's words convey the belief that:

- * Self-esteem is a vital element of human personality.
- * Self-esteem is a feeling and not a thought process.
- * Being mistreated by others can cause a person's self-image to deteriorate and/or not develop properly.
- * Self-love is a prerequisite to being loved by others and loving others, including God.
- * A person must fix his poor self-image.

Archie and his wife, Edith, serve the Lord at a nearby Baptist church. They met while they were attending a Bible college in the Midwest. Archie believes in the inerrancy of God's Word and is very orthodox when it comes to his preaching and teaching ministry. However, when it comes to solving life's problems, Archie is very unorthodox.

Archie is like many believers who have no practical or "everyday" theology. Archie has taught others the doctrines of sin, salvation, and the connection between faith and works. He has preached at Bible conferences and revival meetings. Unfortunately, the great doctrines of the Christian faith that Archie knows so well are not relevant and practical to him when it comes to solving the problems of everyday living. Archie's theology tells him that Jesus died and rose, that faith without works is dead, and that God answers prayer, but it doesn't tell him how to counsel people who are depressed or fearful. Like many Christians today, Archie looks for answers outside of the Scripture. He looks to psychology for instruction and help. Psychology tells Archie he needs to love himself.

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