

May 14, 2013

EXTREME FAITH

Extreme Friendship

Knowing how God sees us
frees us to be us!
And when we are us we are
at our best!



EXTREME FRIENDSHIP

How do you love yourself...Mixed Signals

How much do you love yourself? How often do you feel completely satisfied with the person you are? Do you wish you were taller? Shorter? Do you like your hair color? Do you like your face, your laugh, your smile? If you were given the option to change anything about you would you take the option? How content we are in own skin helps answers the question "How much do we love ourselves." If you are dissatisfied and wishing for something more, don't be discourage at times we all feel this way. How much do you love yourself is a topic that well lets face it, no one really likes to talk about it, well some do in fact some can't shut up about it. But we must ask the question, "How much do you love yourself?"

Yea it does seem funny that we need to think about how much we love our own person, our personality, our physical image, the in and outs that make us, us. However I will say that todays culture has us looking over ourselves daily, but rarely does our culture tell us to be happy with who we are, or to love ourselves. The culture pushes us to look at ourselves and

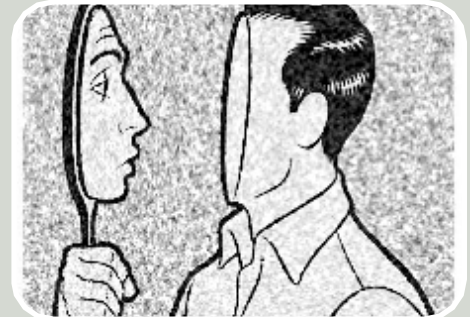
judge do we fit the image, all the while the same culture is pushing us and telling us that we must be selfless and live for the greater good. But culture is not done with us yet as it tells you to be selfless, it is also telling you that you must meet the image of the look... Well it is pretty hard to do both, and to match the image of the culture, well lets face it, it's just not attainable, because I am me and that is who I am. I improve, I grow, I change, but in the end I am I. As these changes develop the I in me maintains a love for me, not a dislike for me causing me to want to change. It seems like culture would have us dislike ourselves as the motivation to change, and chase after what it holds as "perfection."

Why is it important for us to think about how we view ourselves? Because it affects how we view others, and especially how we develop relationships with our friends.

Let's take a look at Luke 10:27 to unravel this. He (Jesus) answered : Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all

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How do you see yourself?

Lets face it in the culture that we live in, makes it pretty hard to look in the mirror and look at yourself for a long time. How you see yourself and feel about yourself says a lot about your relationship with God. The more connected we are in our relationship with God, the more we understand how He sees us. Having a self image that is reflected from God's eyes is the foundation to loving yourself.

God is the true identity of us...

"Beautiful Things"
by GUNGOR

All this pain
I wonder if I'll ever find my way
I wonder if my life could really change at all
All this earth
Could all that is lost ever be found
Could a garden come up from this ground at all

You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us

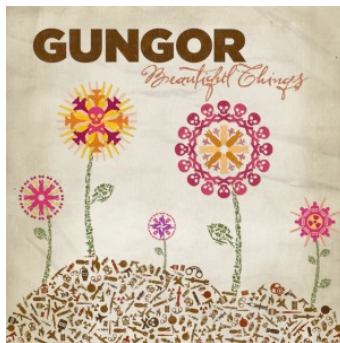
All around
Hope is springing up from this old ground
Out of chaos life is being found in You

You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us

You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us

You make me new, You are making me new
You make me new, You are making me new

You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us



This song is featured on the Beautiful Things album by Gungor

FRIENDSHIP

EXTREME APPLICATION

Knowing who you are and how God sees you, enables you to be all that you were made to be in a friendship. Think about it when you are at your best you have the most to offer. That is what happens when you deepen your relationship with God.

You become your best, and everyone around you benefits from your choice to know who you truly are!

Knowing how God sees us frees us to be us!

And when we are us we are at our best!

Loving yourself Extreme Friendship cont...

your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, **Love your neighbor as yourself.** Right now you might be asking the question what do this have to do with Extreme Friendship? Great question!

Lets take a slower look at that verse and break it down.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all you mind.

When we approach God with that type of passion and completeness we begin to get a different vision of who we are and what we are all about.

Ever had that friend that made you feel good about being you. I mean when you are around them you just like yourself more, and you just felt better about yourself. I hope that everyone has experienced that in their life. Because that is precisely what we are talking about. Think about that verse, which comes to us as a command. Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus is telling us that this is the first and greatest commandment. If it is a commandment than it is thing to put on your check list of things to do. Some might say that it seems somewhat self centered of God to command us to love him. I mean it makes Him out to be needy, like hey if you follow Him you will have to give up all the fun and cool things of this life and you really won't love Him or be excited about Him, at least not on this side of heaven. So he fixed that by giving us this command. But if you love someone because you are commanded to then is it really love? Of course not, it might look like it feel like it to the one receiving it but to the giver it is just completing another check on the things to do for the day. So what is this verse all about, and hey you might be thinking that He is commanding me to love my neighbor (friend) as well, great for them but for me it is just another check on my list... Now if your really thinking this through you might be asking this question, "OH Snap! Is everyone else just completing the check list, are they just filling a command, or do they really think I am worth loving... That's some great thought and it is a little scary to think about.

Lets break it down, and set or wandering processing minds to rest. God, has no need of anything, God is complete in all that He is, God does not need to receive from us to be COMPLETE. God gives direction and commands that enable us to become complete! So this command is for our benefit, and for our growth. In following the commands that we are given, it is us who get the reward, it is us who benefit from the follow through. God does what He does because He love us, the bible tells us that we love because God Himself loved us first. When the people that you love are growing, happier, and more fulfilled then you are happy, if you help them get there than you are snapping happy!

Think About it

Who's back do you have? Who's got your back? Take friendship to the fullest level and think more of them than you do yourself!

For us to follow the greatest command and Love God with Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength, it is us who benefit. We grow because we learn how God sees us through His Son, Jesus. We experience His care, and love because we are with Him. We spend time with Him and He tells us who we are. The command draws us to be with Him and listen to Him. The command is for us that we might always be centered with Him so that we might be able to be the person He created us to be. This command is to protect us from being dissatisfied with ourselves, it is to protect us from the culture that tells us to fall in and fit into culture. God loves to be with us and spend time with Him, but He does not command things for us to do that benefit Him only. He commands things for us to do that protect us and enables us be all that we were made to be.

Now lets dig into the second part of the verse because that is where we learn to apply our time with God and how we view ourself to our friendships. The second greatest command is this, **Love your neighbor as yourself.** So how you feeling about yourself? Still feeling insecure, still wishing that about a million things would change. Still thinking that if this one thing were different than you would be a different person altogether? When we don't love ourselves, we focus only on ourselves and snap the second commandment is hard to do. We want to be a good friend, but hey we gotta fix ourselves, then we can be a better friend. The culture in the world leads us to focus on us and not anyone else. It is a full block of pressures with one purpose keep us from going after the first and second greatest commands. What kind of friend do you want to be, a friend that builds up or sucks out. If you are not happy with you then you will be a suck out friend (*a person who sucks the life out of everyone around them so they can fill better about themselves*). We should quickly understand that the only way we can complete step two is to complete step one first.

So how you feeling about yourself? You loving you, if you have sought to do the step one, then Snap you are loving yourself! Why because you know how much God loves you and you are feeling the vibe that He is sending your way. So now that you are loving yourself, and feeling the vibe God is sending your way, then how easy is it to do step two? Snap! It should be pretty easy, why because you got something to give, your not focused on yourself. You can make friends feel good about who they are, you can even tell them how much God loves them. Who wants to be that kind of a friend? Snap everyone, lets face it we just feel better about ourselves when we are not focused on ourselves.

The commands of God are for us not for God Himself alone, does He value you to hang with Him and feel the vibe, of course cause He loves you. Do you love to be with your friends, and build them up of course! You love to hang with them. In turn as you hang with your friends, they will build you up as you build them up, and the Greatest commandment goes full cycle, and changes the culture into what it should be not what it is. Now that is a SNAP moment for all of us!



DIG IN

Read Luke 10:27

What are the top five things that you like about yourself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can these things be used to be a better friend?

How do you think Loving God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, will help you to love yourself more?

What happens when you love yourself more because you see how much God loves you?

Knowing how God sees us frees us to be us!
And when we are us we are at our best!

STEP ONE:

Serve

STEP TWO:

Love 'em
like yourself

STEP THREE:

Emotionally
connected

STEP FOUR

Make it last
Strong Foundation

DO YOU LOVE YOURSELF?
DO YOU LOVE YOURSELF?
DO YOU LOVE YOURSELF?

TAKE SOME TIME AND JOURNAL.

Look it over, read the story again, dig into the questions and write out your thoughts...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

EXTREME APPLICATION

I've read about Jonathan and David a ton of times. I've seen four things that these two guys did to build, strengthen, and continue their friendship.

The Second thing that stands out in Jonathan and David's friendship

Jonathan Loved David like he loved himself

"He loved him as he loved his own soul" (1 Sam. 20:17). What does it mean to love someone as you love your own soul? For one thing, it means you give the person you call your closer-than-a-brother friend the same care that you give yourself. You look out for things that might hurt him or cause him to stumble, and you do whatever you can to remove the potential obstacle from his path. But it's more than that. It means you give your friend the same care you give your own soul, your own spirit, and your own physical being. But it's more than that. It means you help your soul mate avoid whatever you try to avoid. Whatever sins you struggle with, you help him avoid too. Three arrows. Instruments of War used to save a friend. Whatever hardships you find difficult to endure, you help him endure. Whatever pain you think you could never conquer, you help him conquer. Stop and think about your friends right now. Consider those you believe you love as you love your own soul. Are you out to advance them? Are you seeking to help them succeed? Are you on a mission to make sure they avoid as much sin as possible? Soul mates like this aren't bought, and they don't appear overnight. They're hammered out over time. Through Jonathan and David's experiences together, their friendship grew to an unbelievable depth. They knew a level of commitment that few people ever experience. So be honest. Do you have any friendships like that? Is there anyone you truly love as your own soul?

MODERN EXTREMES

"I Rest in the Arms of God" Ivadejda Sloboda U.S.S.R.

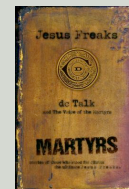
"You must come to my house tonight and listen to the radio with us" Nadejda whispered to her neighbor. "I have never heard anything like it before. A man is preaching God's Word from the Bible. I don't know how it happened, but these broadcasts have changed my life!" Nadejda Sloboda was the first one in her village to be converted through Gospel broadcasting in Russia from stations in neighboring countries. Soon, her love for God and her zealous witness brought others to Christ. Although she wasn't a pastor, she formed a church in her village. As time passed, this church grew so mightily that the police had to surround the village to keep people of the nearby collective farms from coming to hear the Gospel message.

For this, Sister Sloboda was sentenced to four years of prison. Her five children were forcibly taken away to an atheistic boarding school. Her husband was left alone. In prison, Sister Sloboda told other prisoners about Christ. For this, she was confined in an unheated, isolated cell, where she had to sleep on the cold, concrete floor without a mattress. Prisoners find it impossible to sleep in such conditions: Even the walls are too cold to lean against comfortably. Some report that by standing with just their forehead touching the wall, they could manage to sleep enough to survive for a few days. Yet Sister Sloboda was kept in this cell for two months! Not only that, during the day she was put to hard labor with the other

prisoners. The Communists expected that the lack of sleep combined with the hard labor would completely ruin her health and break her resolve to stand for her faith. Yet she never weakened. Everybody asked, "How can you endure it?" She answered, "I fall asleep on the cold concrete floor trusting in God and it becomes warm around me. 'I rest in the arms of God.'"

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27 Nrv

Humanly speaking, we know that no one likes to suffer physically. But I know that if the Lord leads me into it, He will give me the strength to survive it. Pastor Li De Xian Mainland China 1990s



Featured Story
from the book
Jesus Freaks dc
Talk and the
voice of the
Martyrs



Living life with

Extreme faith
and
Extreme vision

EXTREME FAITH MAGAZINE

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