MODULE #10

SELF-ESTEEM AND MASKS

SELF-ESTEEM

1. DEFINITIONS:

When we have good (positive) SELF-ESTEEM, we no longer look to OTHERS to meet our needs and tell us who we are, because we do not feel so empty inside.

A. Self-esteem:

1. Self-esteem is how we see ourselves, and the VALUE we apply to ourselves.

2. Self-esteem is how we evaluate ourselves as a PERSON, according to our belief systems.

3. Self-esteem is formed by our BELIEF about ourselves in CHILDHOOD. This is developed as we interact with others.

B. Self-image

1. Self-image is how we think other view us. Our self-image comes from what WE THINK others think about US.

2. If we have a low self-image, we will form a MASK to cover and hide, so that the “REAL” me will not be exposed.

C. High self-esteem

1. If we have a HIGH self-esteem, we will be more secure in who we are.
Theotherapy
“A Journey to emotional Healing”

2. High self-esteem is the ABILITY to recognize and feel comfortable with both our weaknesses and our strengths. We can acknowledge our weaknesses and desire to change them and also embrace our strengths and be comfortable with building on them because neither define us as human beings.

3. When we have a high self-esteem, we do not have to HIDE who we are. This gives others MORE FREEDOM to be who they are without FEELING insecure around us.

D. When we are uncomfortable with who we are, we may experience:

1. Fear of being DISCOVERED for who we are, which heightens our anxiety.

2. Great amounts of psychological energy being USED up, just to live life.

3. A need to always be RIGHT, because we are trying so hard to validate ourselves.

4. Fear of rejection (“If they saw the REAL me, they would leave me or reject me”).

2. CAUSES OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM:

A. The foundations of self-esteem are laid early in life.

A child learns to “TRUST or MISTRUST” during infancy (first year). This TRUST of a parent will establish AUTONOMY, a sense of separation from mother (significant other).

au-ton-o-my (noun)—The right or condition of self-government; freedom from external control or influence; independence

B. Interpersonal relationships PLAY a major part in development (especially in the fundamental unit-family). In bonding to mother (significant other) the child FEELS safe and loved. Apart from this
**Theotherapy**

“A Journey to emotional Healing”

**BONDING**, a child develops SHAME of being, or feels too unimportant to exist.

C. What the child perceives that the mother and father THINK of him/her in formational years will determine a good or bad **SELF-IMAGE** and what they THINK others will think of them.

D. **SELF-REJECTION** leads to LOW **SELF-ESTEEM**.

Children can learn to reject themselves if they are treated badly in a dysfunctional home. Children THINK that their parents are all good, therefore they must be bad (see ambivalence) if their parents communicate that idea through their actions and attitudes.

E. A family system in which it is never SAFE to be yourself causes a child to have low **SELF-ESTEEM**.

3. **THE CONSEQUENCES OF SELF-HATRED PRODUCE THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS:**

   A. Depression

   B. Anger

   C. Lack of self-assertiveness

   D. Judging others

   E. Criticism

   F. Affects interpersonal relationships

   G. Development of masks to try to hide the real us

   H. False concepts of oneself
Theotherapy
“A Journey to emotional Healing”

I. Inability to accept self or others

J. We develop ways to defend ourselves against **PSYCHOLOGICAL PAIN**. Some of those ways include:

1. Withdrawing / isolating / “numbing out” / addictive behaviors

2. Becoming less dependant on others. Fear that people will always disappoint us may cause us to avoid relationships altogether.

**MASKS**

1. **MASKS**

   A. The origin of wearing masks comes from a desire to please others but feeling inadequate to do so. This comes from a LACK of self-worth. You may believe that, “if I behave in a way that pleases you, then you will like me”. You then form the **MASK** you think others want to see. As you feel safe enough to drop these masks, you discover the **REAL** you and find significance and value.

   B. When we feel pressure to meet others’ expectations, we develop suitable **MASKS** to meet the demand.

   C. We long for people to know and **LOVE** the real us. However people are never really sure who we are when wear masks, because our **REAL SELVES** are hidden.

   D. Compliments **FEEL** uncomfortable, because we know they are praising our mask instead of the real us.

   E. Criticism hurts more than it should. We **FEAR** it is the real us, and not our mask being attacked, because we **BELIEVE** it is proof of our worthlessness.
Theotherapy
“A Journey to emotional Healing”

F. Masks keep us from growing, because the Lord changes the real person, not the IMAGE. Not only do we protect ourselves from being hurt, we also guard ourselves from receiving LOVE.

G. Masks inhibit social interaction with OTHERS, because a good RELATIONSHIP requires a level of intimacy our masks will not allow. This produces more REJECTION and inhibits emotional growth.

H. We are set up for further rejection when our MASKS prove themselves to be inadequate.

2. CURE FOR LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND MASKS

A. Identify the masks – take an honest inventory of the ways we try to convince ourselves, others and even God that we are someone different than who we really are.

B. Recognize self-images that are contrary to the “real” self and CHOOSE to believe the TRUTH that God says about you.

C. As we look to God for our value and worth, we will no longer NEED to look to others.

D. Separate our WORTH from performance and decisions. We need to know we are accepted unconditionally apart from our PERFORMANCE.

E. Discover VALUE in the GREATEST significant others…the Lord!

F. As we discover that the LORD is our significant other and NOT our PARENTS, we will develop a good self-image, and not need to set our GOALS based on others’ expectations.
STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What is self-esteem?

2. What is self-image?

3. What part can parents play in low self-esteem?

4. What are some ways a person defends themselves against psychological pain?

5. Describe which of these two you relate to most and why.
   a. Low self-esteem
   b. Poor self-esteem

6. What is the origin of masks?

7. How can compliments be a problem if a person wears masks?
Theotherapy  
“A Journey to emotional Healing”

8. How are we still looking at our parent(s) as our significant other instead of the Lord?

9. Describe at least two masks you have worn, how you thought they helped you, and how they hindered you.

Upon completion of these study questions please mail them to:
Marcus Odom, GLF-President  
RMSI / 387496 / 6B-109  
Nashville, Tennessee 27228