

A MESSAGE ON YOUR GOD-GIVEN WORTH

DEALING WITH PUT-DOWNS

Sometimes the ability to overcome perceived disabilities is the greatest ability of all.



By George Foster

Sometimes we worry too much about what others think of us. As a teen-ager, I often resented my father's derogatory remarks about me. The apostle Paul, one of God's most effective spokespersons in history, knew what some people thought and said about him. He acknowledged that awareness and told how he handled it. Referring to comments made about him, he made this statement:

"Some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.' Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present. We do not dare to classify ourselves or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:10-12).

Does anyone enjoy being put down by others? Of course not! Not even the great apostle could have enjoyed it, but when it happened, he had a clear understanding of who he was, and he allowed that understanding to help him keep the appropriate self-esteem in place. I can imagine Paul telling himself:

- I don't have to compete with others for a place in God's will.
- God has a plan for my life and I will follow it.
- God has made me in such a way that I can live up to His plan.
- I make mistakes, but I am a work in progress.
- God has prepared something special for me to do.
- God has prepared me to do it.
- I don't have to deny my worth by false humility.
- I don't have to prove my worth by self-absorbed activity.
- I don't have to display my worth by excessive vanity.
- I can accept my worth as coming from God, and act on it.
- I will live to please God and not people.
- I will not be inappropriately affected by the positive affirmation I receive, nor by the negative criticism that might come my way.

Take your cue from God's Word and don't waste your time comparing yourself with others. Are they better-looking, smarter or more capable than you? It doesn't matter. You

must never allow yourself to think that you are not intelligent enough or capable of doing excellent work. God made you in such a way that you can fulfill His plan for your life. You are capable and of value to your God, your self, your family and to society.

It's not always the most capable people who do the best job. The ones who are willing to get started and persevere are usually the ones God chooses. Sometimes the ability to overcome perceived disabilities is the greatest ability of all. Along with the perseverance come experience, tenacity, character, and hope. These qualities can enable us to surpass those who have coasted along on their good looks and intelligence. You don't have to be equipped to do God's will for another person; you *are* equipped to do God's will for you!

God gives you value. You are worth more than you think you are. Your value is not determined by how much you earn or accumulate. It has nothing to do with your personal appearance or ability. It doesn't matter what family you come from, where you live, or who you know. It isn't defined by your popularity, productivity or personality. Your value is not relative or comparative. Your Creator establishes it. It cannot be increased or diminished. You were made in God's image and in his likeness. You are as valuable as everyone and no less valuable than anyone. Your Creator gives you value.

If our sense of worth is based on appreciation for the way God created us and in dependence upon His working through us, we will not feel a need to imitate or to convince ourselves and others that we have value. Our performance will not be a show; it will be authentic.