PRECIOUS TO GOD!

**OVERVIEW**

Most teenagers struggle with self-esteem. They can’t imagine someone loving them completely for who they are. We will look at the high value that God places on each person; this value comes from God, not from themselves. That’s what makes their lives worthwhile and meaningful!

**OPENER**

Have the group list several of the most popular songs on the radio, write them on the whiteboard. Have them evaluate which songs either place value on a person (like a love song) or seem to devalue people (songs that advocate violence, sexual assault, etc.). Rate each song on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being “this song truly values an individual” and 10 being “this song disses everything about a person”). For songs that value people, ask the group to determine why the singer values the other person – are these for good reasons or faulty ones? Is the person singing about true human love, or more about sexuality or outward appearance? Have them quote some of the lyrics from each song if they can.

Point out that many songs treat people much differently than God treats them. Then point out that we will be discussing the real reasons each person is valued and why each person’s life is meaningful.

**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Do the “How valuable am I?” sheet (we will discuss this during small group time). Ask them to answer the first question before they read & answer the second question, and to not change their answer.

Read **Psalm 8**. After reading the psalm, take some time to summarize its sections. The first part speaks of God’s majesty, the second part finds David (the author) wondering how such a great God could care about mere humanity, and the third part lists some of the wonderful things God has done for us.

* + What question does David ask in verse 4?
  + Has anyone ever asked that same question?
  + Knowing that God has done a lot of awesome things for them, which one is their favorite?

Read **John 3:16**. This is a frequently quoted verse because of its message of salvation.

* Because of his great love for you, what did God do?
* What wonderful blessing do you receive?
* What does this tell you about how valuable you are to God?
* How would you explain this to people who don’t think that they are loved by God?

Read **Romans 5:8, and 8:31-32.**

* What three things in these verses show that God cares for you?

Read **Romans 8:35-39.**

* + Will God’s love for you and the high value he places on you ever change? Why or why not?
  + How does being so valued by God make you feel?
  + How does this change how you feel about God?
  + Does this change how you feel about your life and how you live it?

**WRAP-UP**

God’s love is based on His nature – not on how popular, cute, talented, rich or funny people are. His love is unconditional, never-ending and always the same!

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

***Both Groups:***

Discuss the “How valuable am I?” sheet. How did they rank themselves? This will be a good indicator of their self-esteem. Be careful not to ask for specific rankings, as they may not want to share their personal feelings about themselves. Instead, ask them how teenagers in general would rank themselves. How did they rate themselves differently than how they rated how much God values them? Should they be the same? Why or why not? Point out that each of them has value placed on them by God, and each of them is an instrument to be used by God. Without this purpose, some people feel useless and hopeless.

***Senior Group:***

Low self-esteem robs people of the value they have in God. In order to love others and love God, they must love themselves too! Have a discussion with the group about self-esteem. What shapes their self-esteem? What influence does society have on them (advertisement, songs, social media, etc.)?

Read **Matthew 22:37-39.** What does this say about loving ourselves as God loves us?

Why should they value themselves and others? The answer is simple – because God does! Showing God’s love to others means accepting others for who they are and valuing each of them, just as God does. Let them know that you value each of them! Now how do they value each other? Their friends? Their sometimes irritating parents? Their annoying siblings? Close by praying for the members of your group, thanking God for demonstrating how much He values them – and ask for His strength to help them value others as He values them.

***Junior Group:***

How does the media and society shape what people value? Spend some time talking about how TV, movies and music have affected what others think of each other. For example, what do movies say about sexual respect and genuine love? Who does society hold in high esteem, and is that person worthy of ultimate respect and admiration? How do these influences compare to their individual admirations and high regard for others? What about Christians at large?

Read **Matthew 22:37-39.** What does this say about loving ourselves as God loves us?

Take a moment to acknowledge your appreciation and love for each of them. Point out that each one of them is extremely valuable to the group, and that you appreciate the different characteristics that they bring to the group. The uniqueness of each one brings variety to the group. Without variety, a group would be dull! What could they each do this week for someone that they appreciate (a friend, family member, teacher, pastor, etc.)? Encourage them to follow through with it – it may be a simple e-mail, note or phone call. Close in prayer for your group and for the value that God has for each of them, and ask Him to help us value each other as He does.