

Finding worth through love

What Does This Mean?

Loving ourselves appropriately matters. Jesus said, “Love your neighbor as yourself” ([Matthew 22:39](#)). To do that, we need to find a way of sensing our worth without becoming self-centered.

Our deep-felt need to know that we matter can result in low self-esteem if we are not affirmed. It also can result in an inappropriate sense of our own importance if we bolster that need by status, power, and a misuse of relationships. If we raise self-esteem but ignore the negative parts of our characters, we will create a fragile sense of worth that does not face reality ([Romans 3:23](#)).

Jesus underlined human worth by welcoming the sinners and outcasts of his day ([John 6:37](#)). Christians find a deep significance in being created, loved, and forgiven by God. This gives us the freedom to face our sin without our sense of worth crumbling ([Romans 5:8](#)). Salvation is grace, a gift of God. We cannot earn it, and it does not rely on achievements; this, in turn, gives us a deep sense of security.

A sense of worth should be enhanced by loving relationships within the community of Christians, in order to turn outward and serve others. The Bible often describes this as encouraging and building each other up ([1 Thessalonians 5:11](#)). We can be honest about our abilities without boasting; we can thank God for them.

What Does This Mean in School?

This view of worth will affect the planning of lessons and the people we select to focus on in subjects such as English, health, and history.

- The heroes we select can have flaws but still be models whose actions were worthwhile.
- We can choose some unsung people or groups who made a difference in the world.

- In literature we can include a focus on the characters whose integrity stands out and who made a difference to their neighbors but did not necessarily do anything conventionally heroic. We also can look at characters who are despised, and ask what effect that has.
- In health class, teaching about self-esteem can be done from within a Christian framework.
- We can look at the message our testing and assessment are sending and at what we reward and respond to in school. Are our systems undermining students' sense of significance and worth?

Think of occasions when students' low or inappropriate self-esteem has been a problem in school. Identify a lesson or unit where the teaching and learning could reinforce a different message. An English lesson can explore various characters' significance and worth. The teaching and learning can supply a means of engaging with the content that does not allow students with inappropriate self-esteem to dominate.



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