

## God's Opinion of You!

Everybody needs to be appreciated, affirmed and validated. How true that is and how important that is.

If I asked you to tell me something about yourself, what would you say? You might say, "I was a mechanic" or "I worked in the woods" or "I was a fisherman."

"Oh, I'm a stay at home Mom. I'm just a home maker." "Me? Oh I'm retired."

We generally don't speak very highly of ourselves. But what if I was to ask someone else to describe you? I know we would get a very different picture.

"Oh, her, she is one of the best cooks around." "That guy can fix anything. And it's done right, it's done quickly, and it stays fixed."

"She's such a wonderful person. Never has a bad word to say about anyone."

"He may be retired but he's always there when you need help. What a friend."

As I said those things, I'm sure that certain people came to your minds. But you'd never hear them say those things about themselves.

Nine years ago I was driving a charter tour around the province. I got talking to a guest from a place in Ontario. Quiet sort. Couldn't tell you what he did for a living but as we were talking he let it slip that he had a school named after him. A school named after him? And he was still alive?

Long story short: in 1964 Bill was the Canadian record holder in all races from 400m to 1500m. He was also the world record holder in the 800m race. And he was the silver medal winner in the 800m in those Olympics.

At the end of another tour a guest gave me a book. "Ah, just something I've written" he said. Turns out he was "Canada's most respected liver transplant physician".

So generally our opinion of ourselves will be a lot different than what someone else would say.

In fact, in the bible we are even cautioned about elevating ourselves higher than what we should. Or beyond what is accurate. Even when we tell the truth about ourselves we can brag and boast rather than just presenting the facts. Luke 18:10-12 "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters,

sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'" (That's from the NLT)

What do we learn from this? The Pharisee was boasting about how good he was. The good things he said about himself were true. But his attitude that was all wrong.

Rom. 12:3 "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you."

But what if we think of ourselves...say, the way **GOD** thinks of us? What if we have the same opinion of ourselves that **God** has of us?

This is one of the intentions of A Pinch of Salt: To help you realize just what God **thinks** about you. When we read what His opinion of us is, and if we accept what His opinion of us is, and especially important, what if we **BELIEVE** what God's opinion of us is...

Would we be thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought? Would we? Of course not. Because we are thinking the **same** thing about ourselves that God is thinking about us. And there isn't **any** higher opinion than God's. Any opinion lower than God's does not matter. God's opinion is the **ONLY** opinion that **DOES** matter.

If you hold a lower opinion of yourself than the opinion God has, well maybe you're saying you don't believe what God says about you. You're thinking God **is** wrong. That He doesn't know what He's talking about.

Those are serious things to say or to think.

So...what **DOES** God think about us? What does **HE** say about us? What **value** does He place on us? And how important are **we** to God?

Too start with let's look at Is. 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

There we read God's thoughts are higher than ours. And God thought they're important enough to put in His bible so **we** can read it for ourselves. So we can actually **see** it.

But do we **accept** God's thoughts? Do we **believe** God's thoughts?

Rom. 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still yet sinners, Christ died for us."

He didn't die for us when we got it all together. When we had our lives in order. He didn't die for us when we quit spittin' and chewin' and cussin' and drinkin' and smokin' and tokin' and runnin' around and anything else.

He died for us before we **DID** all that. **LISTEN now**, knowing we **would** do all that. That's how much He loved us. That's how much He thought of us.

John 3:15-16 "that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

And all He asks is that we believe in Him. And when we do believe in Him, what does He do?

He changes us. We become a new creation. The old isn't polished up, given a spit shine, just to look good on the outside. He makes us brand new. A new creation. Brand new on the inside.

Do you realize that when you believe and are born again, you become a new creation,? Absolutely **NOTHING** like you ever existed before? You are a totally brand new, never before seen, new creation. Created to be just like Christ.

Remember in Gen. 2:2-3 it says, "By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done."

But God had a different work of creating to do. A spiritual work of creating. When you believe He spiritually creates you, you are a completely new, totally different creation. That's one reason God thinks so highly of you.

Another reason is found in Eph. 1:13-14 "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory."

When you believe, He puts His Spirit in you. As a deposit, meaning there's **more** to come. His Spirit in you is a guarantee you will live forever with Him.

2 Cor. 1:21-22 "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

Notice it says, "makes both us and you stand firm"? We'll get back to that in a little bit.

His Spirit in you is the guarantee that He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will **never** take His Spirit out of you.

2 Tim. 2:13 “Even when **we** are faithless, **He** remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.”

You may say, “Yes, but you don’t know me.”

I don’t need to know you. I don’t need to know you. I know that God’s Spirit **in** you is God’s guarantee **to** you. And even if you are faithless, God isn’t faithless. He remains faithful to you.

Romans 3:3 says, “True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful?”

The answer of course is “No”.

Rom. 8:35-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God does not tell us what **CAN** separate us from His love. He tells us what **CANNOT** separate us.

- not trouble or hardships
- not persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or the sword
- not death or life
- not angels, and there’s no a demon that can
- not the present - meaning anything you do or **are** doing
- not the future - meaning anything you **COULD** do
- no powers; neither height nor depth
- nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God

But I’ve heard people say, “ha, Yes, but **Me**, you don’t know **Me I** can separate myself from the love of God.” And they say it as if they were proud of that fact.

Are you part of “anything else in all creation”? Yes, of course you are. Then **YOU** cannot separate yourself.

Did you notice something else? It says neither the **present** can separate you and neither the **future** can separate you.

But what about the past? **YOU DON'T HAVE ONE!** In Christ you don't have a past. Not at any time. Not to Him. He dealt with all your past.

And something else we tend to miss in Rom. 8:35 It says, "**WHO** can separate us..." Are you a "**WHO**"? Then **YOU**, who are a **WHO**, cannot separate **YOU**.

Heb. 9:24-28 "For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not His own. **Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But He has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, **so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.**"

He suffered for sin **ONCE**. He entered heaven **ONCE**. He did away with sin **ONCE**.

And we died to sin **once** (Rom. 6:2). When He comes back He is not coming because of sin. He took all sin away: the sin of Adam - gone; all **our** past sins - gone; all our present sins - gone; all our future sins - gone. Gone! They're all gone. When He comes back He's coming back to bring salvation to us.

Okay, we've looked at some reasons why God thinks so highly of us. And that's also the reason God's opinion of you **is** so high.

There's lots more we could read but we're going to look at just four more scriptures.

Col. 1:21-22 "**Once** you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He **has** reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation"

You **are** holy in God's sight. You **are** holy in God's opinion. Why? Because **He** presents you **without** blemish and **He** presents you free from accusation.

Who does He present you to? He presents you to Himself. Jude vs 24 "To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before **His** glorious presence without fault and with great joy".

“Without blemish” means “without spot; faultless; unblameable”. That’s without any sin, not even one sin, counted against you.

“free from accusation” or “unreproveable” the King James Version says. That means you “cannot be called into account; unaccused”. No one can accuse you of anything, sin included. You are “blameless”.

Why? Because **He** reconciled us. Because **He** paid the price. We are just as He is. Holy and righteous.

Eph. 5:25-27, 32 Some of you may think this is strange passage to read when we’re talking about God’s opinion of us. But it is a very descriptive passage of what God thinks of us.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, **just as Christ does the church— for we are members of His body.** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—**but I am talking about Christ and the church.**”

What is God saying to in these verses? What is God saying to us **TODAY**? Right now.

Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church. How did Christ love the Church? The Church is you and me, by the way. We are the Church. We are His Church. He gave Himself up for us and died for us.

Why did He do that? To make the Church holy. That’s you and me. We are holy. We were **cleansed**, and then He **presented** - **PAST TENSE** - the Church, that’s you and me, to Himself.

And we were presented to Himself as a radiant church. The King James says, ‘a glorious church.’ We are the Church remember. “Glorious” means to be “held in good or in great esteem, of high repute, notable, glorious, splendid, figuratively free from sins.”

He presented you and me without stain of sin, without wrinkle, without blemish. You and me holy and without blame for anything. And free from any guilt!

Since some people have difficulty grasping that God would do that for them, maybe that’s why the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write, “This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the Church”.

But it's a mystery that **has been** revealed to us.

God has a very high opinion of you because of what **HE** did and what He chose to do for **YOU**.

Remember I mentioned 2 Cor. 1:21-22 and I said I would get back to that, to the words "stand firm"?

In 1 Cor. 1:8 God also promises there, "He will keep you **firm** to the end, so you will be **blameless** on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Back to Jude vs 24 for a minute:

"To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy"

"To Him", that's Jesus; "who is able", that's Jesus.

The Greek words have much more meaning than the English translation gives us. So we will hear the English word and the Greek word and their meaning.

The word "able" is from a Greek word, *doo nam ahee*. From that word comes *dunamis* - meaning power, like the power of the Holy Spirit;

"to keep you" - "keep" another Greek word *phulasso* meaning "keeping guard, watching, keep an eye on lest he escape; guard a person that he remain safe; guard to keep from being snatched away; guard from being lost or perishing;

"falling" is *aptaistos*, keep from stumbling, **standing firm** (there it is), exempt from falling;

"to present you" - *histemi* "to cause or **make to stand, make firm**, establish, be kept intact, to escape in safety;

"without fault" - *amomos* - "without rebuke, without blame, without spot; morally without blemish, faultless, unblameable."

You will be presented by the Lord Jesus Christ, to Himself, without any fault whatsoever.

You will be blameless and without accusation. Without blemish. And without wrinkle. You will be as holy as God Himself is holy.

And how is Jesus going to present you? What will His manner be? It says with exceeding joy. That's great joy. Exultation. Exuberant joy.

I cannot imagine the joy Jesus will have when He says, “Father, this is Paul. This is...this is...”

Put your own name in there. Jesus will be shouting it out with great joy. How is He going to be able to do that? Because of His opinion of you. His very high opinion of you. His true wonderful opinion of you. Because He loves you so much. Because He thinks so much of you. He thinks so very highly of you.

In HIS opinion you were worth suffering for. You were worth dying for. You were worth it. And you ARE worth it.

One last scripture. 2 Tim. 2:15 we will read the first half from a number of versions.

NIV “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

NET “Make every effort to present yourself”

ASV “Give diligence to present thyself”

Message “Concentrate on doing your best for God”

New Living Version “Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval”

King James Version “Study to show thyself approved unto God”.

Study? That sounds different than the rest. And it is.

What we just read was do your best, make every effort, give diligence, concentrate on doing, work hard. But in the King James it says, “Study”.

I believe The King James has the closest to what God is really saying. What He wants us to know.

Let me repeat the King James verse again, “Study to show thyself approved unto God”.

I’m going to read it one more time but with a little different emphasis. And I’ve taken the liberty to elaborate so we can understand just what God is truly saying.

”Study.....to show thyself....that God approves of you.”

And this is what we have been looking at. God DOES approve of you. Because HE HAS MADE YOU ACCEPTABLE IN HIS SIGHT.



By His death, and by you believing in Him, He has made you without fault, without blame, without spot, without wrinkle. Without **ANYTHING** that would, or could, or could ever, keep you from being the **PERFECT CREATION** God has made.

God approves of you. God loves you. God has a very high opinion of you. Read the bible and you will see verse after verse that reveals just how much God loves you.

When you find verses that tell you this, read them out loud. Again. And again and again. See them. Read them. Hear them. Believe them. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

I started by saying everyone needs to be appreciated, affirmed and validated. And the word of God does just that. We don't need to struggle and work and to stress to **GET** God's approval. Jesus has looked after that for us. We get His approval when we believe. And we keep His approval.

What's God's Opinion of You? It's a very good opinion. It's a very high opinion.

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