

CREATION MOMENTS

Proclaiming Evidence for Truth

THIS WEEK'S CREATION MOMENT

Self-Esteem and Forgiveness



And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. (Luke 18:13)

We hear a lot about "self-esteem" today. The "self-esteem movement," made up of some religious teachers and psychologists, seeks to make people feel better about themselves without making any reference to sin or the need for forgiveness. Some religious teachers have even said that

Christianity should stop talking about sin. Because the movement is associated with psychology, many mistakenly believe that the claims of the "self-esteem movement" have a scientific basis. They do not.

Consider the Pharisee who prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men..." From the world's standpoint, he had no trouble with self-esteem. On the other hand, the world would say that the sinner who prayed, "God be merciful to me, a sinner..." had a serious self-esteem problem. In Jesus' analysis, however, the Pharisee's self-righteousness – his "good self-image" – was what kept him from God. The sinner's knowledge of his self-worthlessness and his humble repentance brought him the peace of God in a personal relationship with Him.

From this vantage point, it is easy to see that the cult of self-esteem promotes self-righteousness. Adding Christ to self-esteem still produces self-righteousness. Christians and all people need to be encouraged to focus on Christ! The Christian who lives a daily life of repentance in the full knowledge that Christ has redeemed him, making full atonement and peace with God, will have no "self-esteem problem."

Ref: Scott M. Marincic. 1992. "Grace and Truth – Not Self-Esteem." Lutheran Witness, Jan, p. 21. Photo: Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist who played a key part in the rise of the self-esteem movement.

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