

your worth in **Christ**



self-study workbook

by Brent Kercheville

your worth in Christ

rules for the road

- 1 Be concise.** Please share your thoughts and answers, but be considerate so that others will have time to share their answers also. Be charitable and kind. Be willing to share with the group, but do not try to dominate the conversation. Use the time after the class to find help with any personal issues or problems you may be confronting in your life.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

(James 1:19–20)

- 2 Be thoughtful with your answer.** Consider your words. Do not simply regurgitate what you have always heard. We have the tendency to speak in “Christianese” — words that only people who grew up on the pews would understand. Think about how your words will be heard by others. Will they understand what you are saying? Is what you are about to say going to be useful for the building up of the faith of others? Or will your words be confusing, cause hurts, or worse, damage someone’s faith? Speak without harshness or anger, but with kindness and humility.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

(Ephesians 4:29)

- 3 Rely on the scriptures for truth.** It is easy to rely upon conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. Bible study is about seeking God’s answers for our lives, not dispensing the advice of the world. We must consider that our natural answers may be the wrong answers if they are not founded on God’s word.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

(1 Corinthians 1:25)

Every woman has different roles and functions depending on their season of life. From daughter, girlfriend, employee, wife, mother, and more, the role you have changes as you journey through life. Along the journey you have many influences that mold and define who you are. In particular, an image of yourself begins to develop: what you think of yourself, who you think you are supposed to be, and what you are supposed to do with your life.

Self-image is the conception you have of yourself, including an assessment of qualities and personal worth. Physical beauty, intelligence, athletic ability, competency, and talent are frequent measures for your self-image. When these are the measuring sticks, many people feel inferior, empty, and worthless. Our "need" for self-worth, value, and significance is only satisfied when we know who we are in Christ. Dismantling these false standards for your worth and establishing true standards for your worth will radically transform your self-image and shift your hope from people's opinions of you to God's opinion of you.

- 1 Self-esteem is the feeling of worth based on skills, accomplishments, status, financial resources, or appearance. There are two sins that we fall into when rely on our own sense of self-worth and self-image.

Read Exodus 4:1-17. Moses looked to his own abilities and skills and thought he could not serve the way God wanted him to. Why does God say Moses could serve him, in spite of his human weaknesses? What do you learn?

Read Luke 18:18-21. Notice how the ruler thinks that by his accomplishments he will be able to enter eternal life. He is full of the sin of pride. **Read James 4:6.** What does God say about those who have pride? What do you learn about relying on your skills?

- 2 Sometimes we can think like the rich ruler in Luke 18, believing that our skills and accomplishments are impressive to God. Read the following scriptures and write down how God sees our skills, accomplishments, and works.

Romans 3:9-18 —

Isaiah 64:4 —

Luke 17:7-10 —

- 3 God is dealing with the problem of pride and boasting. God prepared salvation in a way so that all dependence on human wisdom, human achievement, human abilities, and human skill would be excluded.

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

(James 4:13–16)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

(Ephesians 2:8–9)

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 1:28–31)

- 4 **Read Ephesians 1:3-6.** Paul says we were chosen “before the foundation of the world.” How many achievements had you accomplished before the foundation of the world?

Consider what it means that God loves you and made a way for salvation before the foundation of the world. Why did God do this? Is it because of your actions (see **Romans 5:8-10**)? What then is the basis of God’s saving love to you? (see **Ephesians 1:4-6** again)

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1 Why is it foolish to have a self-image based on our own personal achievements, skills, and abilities?

Who gave your skills and abilities?

What does God think of all your achievements?

- 2 Look at **1 Corinthians 1:28-31** again. Who did God say all our glory/boasting should be in? How can you glory in the Lord this month?

One of the greatest images that press on women today is beauty. Beauty is defined with nearly impossible standards, falsified with airbrushing and digital enhancement, and distorted through plastic surgery. What is seen in movies, television, and magazines is an unreasonable standard for beauty. Yet, in a time that promotes the freedom of women, women are be enslaved to these unfair and irrational standards. This lesson will look to move our value away from external appearances to God's value in you.

Shattering Your False Image

1 Read 1 Peter 3:3-6. What should not be the primary concern of Christian women?

For married women: Please consider that your husband found you attractive for who you were in character and personality and what you looked like externally. You do not need to try to attain some different level of beauty that the world suggests you should be. Your husband should not expect something different from you now than the day you were first married.

For single women: Please consider that you want a man to find you attractive for who you are in your character and personality and what you truly look like externally now, not some sort of facade that cannot be reasonably maintained. If a man does not enjoy you for who you are and what you look like now, then you have not found the right man.

2 Why is putting your image and value in beauty a foolish pursuit?

What is going to happen to your body in the coming years?

What is going to happen to your evaluation of yourself if your value is tied to your physical appearance?

Establishing Your True Image

Your value is not found in who you are or what you have done. Your value is fully understood by seeing what God has done for us. A worth based on our own skills, achievements, wealth, status, or abilities is empty because none of these worldly things can remain with certainty.

Discuss

If your value is bound in what your body can do, then what will happen to your value if you lose your health? If your value is your success, what is your value when you fail at something? If your value is bound to your wealth, what is your value if you become poor? If your value is in your job, what is your value if you lose your job?

- 3 Read Romans 3:10-12 below.** What is our worth/value now that every one of us has corrupted ourselves by our sins?

**“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”
(Romans 3:10–12 ESV)**

- 4 Read the scriptures below.** What is the basis of our value? How costly was our redemption? What is the value that God places on you? Can this value ever be taken away from you?

**But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
(Ephesians 2:4–7)**

Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:31)

**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.
(1 Peter 1:18–19)**

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1** Why is it foolish to have a self-image based on beauty? What can you do if you are experiencing pressure to put your hope in beauty?
- 2** How does the death of Christ show you your worth in Christ?

Another pressure that women face today is in their choice of career. There has been a radical shift in this country concerning women in the workplace. Fifty years ago it was completely acceptable for a woman to stay home and take the role of wife and mother. However, today women who stay home as wives or stay home to mother their children are critically looked down upon. Stereotypes have now been constructed that women who choose not to work a secular job are lazy or useless. This has caused the younger generations to think that staying home with their children is not an option but they must “contribute” their portion to home by taking a secular job.

Shattering Your False Image

- 1 Self-examination is the key to determine if you have your value tied to your career. You can know by answering this question: why do you work? (By the way, this examination is just as true of men who become career oriented and try to find their value in their job).

Read Ephesians 4:28. What does God say is the reason why a person works?

- 2 **Read Titus 2:4-5.** Older women are instructed to teach the younger women certain responsibilities. Write down the six or seven things that Paul says are to be priority in the life of every godly woman:

- 3 Some have taken the instructions of Titus 2:4-5 to mean that a woman cannot work. However, the scriptures speak of godly women working. **Read Proverbs 31:10-31** and the passage below and write down all the secular work these women were doing:

**One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God.
(Acts 16:14 ESV)**

- 4 So if we read about the excellent/worthy woman who sells outside the home and Lydia in Acts 16 selling outside the home, when does having a job/career become sinful?

Establishing Your True Image

- 5 **Read the scripture below.** How are we supposed to think of ourselves?

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

(Romans 12:3 ESV)

What is Paul's concern in how humans would think of themselves?

The standard by which we evaluate ourselves and think with "sober judgment" is "according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." What does this mean? How do we do this?

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1 Why is it foolish to have a self-image based on career? What will happen to your image if you lose your job? What can you do if you are experiencing pressure to put your hope in your work?
- 2 How can you think properly about your career in Christ? How can you think properly about working in the home? How can we think properly about our work as a Christian in his kingdom?

You may be surprised to read that focusing on being a wife and a mother can also be a mistake, placing your hope incorrectly on that role. In an effort to “focus on the family” some have swung the pendulum well past what the scriptures mean for your role as a wife and mother.

Shattering Your False Image

- 1 Some women place much of their hope in being married. Sometimes women reach their 20s in age and begin to experience despair and depression because they are not married. Consider the following situations and discuss why placing your worth in being a wife and mother is a empty, false image.

If your self-image and hope is built on having a husband, what will happen if you are never married?

Discuss: Is it better to never get married than to marry a person who mistreats you and does not “love you as Christ loved the church?”

If your self-image is built on your husband, what will happen to you if your husband dies?

If your self-image is built on your husband, what will happen to you if your husband breaks God's law and divorces you?

If your self-image is built on your husband, what will happen to you if your husband mistreats you, is demeaning to you, and not sacrificial toward you?

If your self-image is built on your husband, what will happen if we ever suffer a time of severe persecution?

Is it sinful to be single? Is there “something wrong with you” to be a single woman? Explain. Do you feel pressure to get married and not be single?

- 2 Consider how placing your worth on your marriage can be damaging to a marriage. Consider the heavy expectations that you bring to a marriage if being married will finally give you the value and worth and purpose you are looking for in life. Write down reasons why such expectations could destroy a marriage:

- 3 Apply all the same questions to be a mother. If your hope is in being a mother and your identity is bound up in your children, what will happen to you if you can't bear children, your children are not perfect, become ill, or die? What will happen to the relationship with your children that will be damaging?

Establishing Your True Image

- 4 **Read 1 Peter 2:9-10.** Write down what each picture of us means and how that changes your value in Christ.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
(1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV)

Chosen race:

Royal priesthood:

Holy nation:

People for his own possession:

Called out of darkness into his marvelous light:

You are God's people:

Received mercy:

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1 Read 1 Peter 2:9 above again. Carefully consider why God has done this for us. Write down why we are the chosen race, holy nation, and his own possession. What are we to be doing?
- 2 How can we accomplish what you have written down for an answer above? What have you learned about who you are in Christ?

Is it possible to be an unhappy Christian? We will surely have bad days and difficult times. We will experience trials and suffering. But can we be a Christian and lack long-term joy? It is a question worth considering particularly because it seems that there are many Christians that lack joy. One reason why we may not be experiencing the Christian joy that God has called us to experience is because, without realizing it, we are focusing on our self-image rather than our God-image. To put this another way, we have certain expectations for how our lives are to go. But when life does not go according to our conception and ideals, we lose our joy in life.

Shattering Your False Image

- 1 What are your expectations for your life? As you answer consider what your expectations were for your life when you were a teenager, in your 20s, in your 30s, in your 40s, etc. How have your expectations changed over time? What are your expectations for life now?
- 2 **Read Job 1:20-21.** What did Job expect from his life? What had Job lost by the hand of Satan in Job 1? How could he say the words he said and worship God after losing everything?
- 3 **Read Job 2:9-10.** Did Job attribute his family, wealth, and health to his own abilities or moral uprightness? Where did Job say everything came from? Also **read James 1:17.**
- 4 How does Job's words in Job 1:21 and 2:10 help us in setting proper expectations for our lives? If we start life with nothing and we end life with nothing, how should we view everything we have and everything that happens in life to us?

Establishing Your True Image

5 How does changing our expectations for life alter how we deal with life when it does not go according to plan? For example: how does this help us with bad or difficult marriages, disabilities, loss of life, loss of health, financial troubles, etc?

6 Read Philippians 4:10. How was Paul able to deal with any change of circumstances in life? What was “the secret” to facing his difficulties? To put it another way, what expectations did Paul have for his life?

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:10–13 ESV)

TRANSFORMATION:

1 Read Romans 8:17-18. How should we handle any sufferings we face? Rather than having expectations for this life, where should we place our hope and expectations? How can you begin doing this today? Be practical.

17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:17–18)

In the last lesson we examined how we can lose joy in life because of our lofty expectations for life. Rather than looking to God for satisfaction, we often look to the things of this world to give us what we need for our self-image and self-esteem. Of course, we become broken when life does not go according to our expectations or desires. In this lesson we will continue to explore how we can find lasting joy which builds our hope on Jesus rather than ourselves.

We have the tendency to look for joy, happiness, and satisfaction in all the wrong places. Sexual immorality/adultery is a growing problem. Wives are tempted to believe that finding another man will bring the happiness longed for. Husbands are tempted to believe that finding another woman will bring them happiness. The scriptures are filled with warnings concerning what will happen to your life if you choose this path. The writer of the Proverbs gives pages of teachings concerning adultery. Read some of these passages below and write down what adultery will bring to your life.

Shattering Your False Image

It is important that we break the fantasy that someone else would be better than the husband that we have. Television, movies, and books only promote the fantasy of an affair. But the writer of Proverbs shows us the graphic reality. Observe what the writer says will happen to your life if you choose to have an affair.

1 Read Proverbs 5:1-14. Write down what will happen to those who commit adultery:

2 Read Proverbs 6:23-35. What will happen to those who commit adultery?

3 Read Proverbs 7:10-27. What will happen to those who commit adultery?

Establishing Your True Image

- 4** Read the following scriptures and write down what precautions you must take to keep yourself from committing adultery and help keep your husband from committing adultery. Write down some practical ways to do this at work, at home, etc.

Proverbs 5:8

Proverbs 5:15-20

Matthew 5:27-28

1 Corinthians 7:2-5

Ephesians 5:33

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1** What steps are you going to take **today** to affair-proof your marriage?

You will not have better self-esteem or feel better about yourself by having an affair or divorcing your husband. Be determined to fix your marriage to the glory of God. Work with your husband to make practical changes that reflect godliness and you will see improvements begin to occur in your marriage.

Happiness often refers to a mood or emotion we feel based upon the circumstances we are experiencing. God does not promise happiness in all things. We will experience pain, suffering, sadness, heartbreak, and more. Rather, God declares that we are to “rejoice always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16). The last few lessons we have observed how maintaining self-esteem, self-image, self-reliance, and life expectations in this world only rob us of our joy that can be found in God. In these final lessons we are going to study how joy is a requirement for the Christian life and how we can find that God-satisfying joy.

Shattering Your False Image

- 1 **Read 1 Corinthians 10:12.** This is a reminder of what you have learned in previous lessons.

**Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.
(1 Corinthians 10:12 ESV)**

What will happen if we rely on ourselves, thinking we are standing by our own power, might, and achievements? How can we avoid this outcome?

Establishing Your True Image

- 2 **Read Matthew 13:44.** Write down where joy is found. What should we be willing to do for the kingdom? How will we do it?

**The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
(Matthew 13:44 ESV)**

- 3 **Read Romans 5:1-2.** Write down where joy is found. How do we obtain this joy?

**1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
(Romans 5:1–2 ESV)**

- 4 Read Romans 5:3-5.** Write down where joy is found. How do we obtain joy in suffering?

**3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame....
(Romans 5:3–5 ESV)**

- 5 Read Romans 5:6-10.** Write down where joy is found. Why would this make us joyful? What are we to put our hope in? What was our identity before Christ? What is our identity after Christ?

**6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
(Romans 5:6–10 ESV)**

- 6 Read Romans 5:11.** Write down where joy is found. What is this reconciliation we have received? Why does this bring life changing joy?

**More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
(Romans 5:11 ESV)**

- 7 Read the scriptures below.** Write down where joy is found. Why is joy important for the Christian? What does it mean if we do not have joy?

**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 14:17 ESV)**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
(Galatians 5:22–23 ESV)**

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1** What steps are you going to take **today** to begin pursuing joy in Christ and in his kingdom?

Happiness often refers to a mood or emotion we feel based upon the circumstances we are experiencing. God does not promise happiness in all things. We will experience pain, suffering, sadness, heartbreak, and more. Rather, God declares that we are to “rejoice always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

This lesson continues to explore how joy is a requirement for the Christian life and how we can find that God-satisfying joy.

Shattering Your False Image

- 1 **Read Galatians 6:3.** This is a reminder of what we have learned in the previous lessons about who we truly are. This verse does not mean that if you are something, then it is okay to think you are something. But if you are really nothing, then it is wrong to think you are something.

**For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
(Galatians 6:3 ESV)**

What is the truth about who we are, according to Paul? What are we?

If we think we are something, what are we doing?

Establishing Your True Image

- 2 **Read Isaiah 61:10.** Isaiah is writing about what the people will do when Christ comes and proclaims the good news (cf. 61:1-3). Why should we rejoice? What is the basis for our joy?

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61:10 ESV)

- 3 **Read Isaiah 65:18-19.** Isaiah speaks of the coming age in Christ. What has God created us to be? What is God doing in his people?

**18 But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.
(Isaiah 65:18–19 ESV)**

- 4 Read Zephaniah 3:14-17.** Zephaniah is speaking about the arrival of the King of Israel. Why should the people be rejoicing at the coming of Christ? What will God do over us? What does this mean?

14 Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15 The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. 16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. 17 The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
(Zephaniah 3:14–17 ESV)

- 5 Read Isaiah 62:4-5.** Isaiah again speaks of the time when Christ, the builder comes. What will God do over us? Why would God do this? What does this tell us about God's plans for us?

4 No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. 5 As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.
(Isaiah 62:4–5 NIV)

TRANSFORMATION:

- 1** Where do we find our joy? How can we keep our joy in God and not in this world?
- 2** What will happen if you maintain your worldly expectations for life and do not find your hope and joy in God?
- 3** Does the Bible ever say to glory in ourselves? Who do we glorify? How can we do this everyday?
- 4** What does Job's life teach us? How can we transform our lives to match his?