

Children of God: You Are Worth Something!

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1a).

"I'm such a loser! I'm a fat, stupid, ugly, klutzy, unlovable geek. I can't do anything right. I'm no good to anybody. I'm just plain worthless!"

Dear friends, have you ever felt that way? I have. As a child, I felt worthless each of the many times I dropped and broke one of my mother's dinner plates. As a teenager, I felt worthless the time I lost a high school tennis match 6-Love, without even winning one point. I felt worthless on occasions when girlfriends told me to get lost. I have felt worthless after making three wrong turns and ending up miles off track, worthless after the time I backed into a parked truck. I've felt worthless after making mistakes on the job and getting chewed out by the boss. Clumsy, no talent, unwanted, ignorant ... worthless -- I can't count the number of times I've felt that way about myself. You've probably all had similar experiences and emotions.

But there is no reason for me to feel worthless. There is no reason for you to feel worthless. The words of God, spoken to us in our text provide an eternal message of comfort. No matter how worthless you or I might feel, God tells us otherwise. He says,

CHILDREN OF GOD, YOU ARE WORTH SOMETHING!

I. HOW THE WORLD JUDGES WORTH

A. Criteria by which people judge.

1. Two biggest are beauty and intelligence. (Dobson)
2. Other measurements people use to add up your value include social status, success, talent, ethnic background.
3. These are common, but not Christian measures for establishing worth.

B. Examples

1. Beauty - the so-called Gold Coin of Human Worth
 - a. Most popular in school?
 - i. Good-looking kids (cutest faces, latest hairstyles, nicest shapes, least pimples, best wardrobe).
 - ii. No date if you're an overweight pizza-face wearing polyester pants from the Goodwill Store.
 - b. Might be nicest person in the world, but not part of the "in" crowd if one does not have good looks.
2. Intelligence - the supposed Silver Coin of Human Worth.
 - a. Parents may rate children by how smart they are.
 - i. Too often we hear parents call children "stupid" or "dummy."
 - ii. Hear enough times a person -- child or adult -- will believe it!
 - iii. If a person believes it he'll stop trying to learn and live down to the label attached to him.
 - b. Some children are smart.
 - i. Always excel, always at the top of the class.

- ii. Expect to be at the top of their profession someday.
 - iii. What if it doesn't happen?
 - B's and C's instead of A's?
 - Passed up by others smarter than they?
 - Result: crushed ego, ruined self-esteem.
 - Own sense of worth depended on intelligence and their academic performance.
3. Further examples all around us.
- i. Size of home, make of car are status symbols.
 - ii. Some judge worth on basis of skin color.
 - iii. People with physical liabilities (elderly, handicapped, retarded) are often seen as drains on society -- viewed as problems instead of as people.
 - iv. Newly conceived children are devalued -- lives ended with the approval of the law.
 - v. Our world is superficial and wrong in its way of judging the worth of human beings.
- C. Too often, we listen to the world's standards.
- 1. We try to measure up to the world's judgment of worth.
 - a. Young people give in to drinking/sexual activity to be accepted by their peers.
 - b. Young couples struggle to keep up with the Joneses, going heavily into debt.
 - c. Aging adults feel worthless as bodies and abilities slow down.
 - 2. We are too concerned about what the world thinks.
 - a. There is a much better judge.
 - b. Be concerned about what God thinks of us and how we fit into his scheme of things -- God is the final judge of real worth.

II. HOW GOD JUDGES WORTH

- A. How do **you** think God sees you?
- 1. A poor, miserable sinner?
 - 2. One who daily sins much and deserves nothing but punishment?
 - 3. One struggling to do good, but without much success?
 - 4. An unclean thing whose righteousnesses are nothing but filthy rags?
 - 5. All of these statements are correct; Bible says that.
- B. God sees us first and foremost "**as his children.**"
- 1. God does not want our main image of ourselves to be negative.
 - 2. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"
 - 3. How can this be since we are poor, miserable sinners?
 - a. Robert Schuller claims you have self-esteem, a sense of dignity and worth because you were made in God's image.
 - i. Catch phrase "God made me, and God don't make no junk!"
 - ii. Important point missing: only two perfect human beings -- Adam and Eve -- they were sinless, perfect, free of junk.
 - b. After they sinned, they lost dignity, their worth plummeted.
 - i. They became disobedient, damnable children of the devil.
 - ii. Because of sin we will never find worth and dignity in ourselves -- **it just isn't there!**
 - iii. Look inside of ourselves and there is junk, junk we cannot hide.
 - iv. It is not by God's will, but junk of our own making -- terrible thoughts, shameful lusts, selfishness, greed, hostility, hatred.
 - v. Sin has polluted us so we are dirty and unworthy in and of ourselves.

4. How can John write: "We should be called children of God ... and that is what we are"?
 - a. This is true only because of the Father's love lavished on us (Jn 3:16).
 - b. We are worthwhile only because God purchased and won us by his blood.
 - c. We were nothing -- God made us something in Christ.
 - d. He sees us as a precious child for whom he died.
5. Look at our value in Christ.
 - a. "God does not love us because we are valuable, but we are valuable because God loves us."
 - i. We are **always** worth something as children of God.
 - ii. God's love is constant, never fluctuating - so is our worth.
 - b. Our value does not lessen.
 - i. When we make a lot of mistakes.
 - ii. When we gain 20 pounds.
 - iii. If our friends leave us.
 - iv. If we grow older and lose energy.
 - c. Our worth comes from God, not from within ourselves.
 - i. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on..."
 - ii. Our worth as persons does not vary from day to day.

III. HOW YOU ARE TO JUDGE WORTH

- A. Knowing how God judges worth changes our perspective on worth.
 1. It starts with the way you judge yourself, measure your own self-esteem.
 - a. Do you see yourself as unattractive, ugly?
 - b. Do you look in the mirror and go, "Blech!"?
 - c. God says, "Look at my **beautiful** child, dressed in Christ's clothes.
 2. Are you not as intelligent as you'd like?
 - a. Do you feel like a dummy? Ignorant?
 - b. God says, "Look at my **brilliant** child, filled with the wisdom and knowledge of Christ.!"
 3. Do you believe your personality is dull? God says, "Look at my **exciting** child, who has the joy of the gospel in his heart!"
 4. Do you feel you are poor?
 - a. Do you wish you had the money of the rich and famous?
 - b. God says, "Look at my **wealthy** child, possessing all the glorious riches of Christ.
 5. Are you getting old?
 - a. Forever conscious of your age?
 - b. God says, "Look at my vibrant **young** child, who has brand new life each day in Christ.!"
 6. We need always bear in mind that we are children of God -- this single fact make you extremely precious and valuable.
- B. We need to look beyond ourselves.
 1. God loves all the world.
 - a. How do you judge the worth of other Christians in your church?
 - i. Do you see them as rivals and compare yourself with them?
 - ii. No need for that -- we are all the children of God and part of his family.
 - iii. As a family we work together, strengthening others.
 - b. How do you judge the value of non-Christians in your community/world?
 - i. God-forsaken unbelievers who deserve to die?
 - ii. Don't worry about them -- leave them alone?
 - iii. Or, lost children, runaways needing help, orphans whom God loves?
 - iv. Remember the worth of each human being as a potential child of God.

- v. We cannot be content to sit idle. We need to speak out.
 - vi. We are compelled to talk about the Savior with person after person, letting them know they, too, are valuable because God loves them.
2. The way to judge worth is always to be based in Christ.
- a. Next time you think, "I'm a loser," remember you are winner in Christ.
 - b. Next time you are upset with a fellow member of the church, remember that person is a child of God, and the Lord loves you both.
 - c. Next time you are tempted to look with scorn or distaste on a non-Christian -- whether an atheist intellectual or a low-life criminal -- remind yourself of God's love for them.
- C. Children of God, you are worth something!
- 1. I am worth something.
 - 2. All of us are worth something ... not because we are such good people, but because God has made us his people.
 - 3. Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ!

[Sermon concept provided by Pastor David Sellnow]