***Selfism, Deism, and Existentialism
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The Destiny of Good, section number 3, in Romans 8:28-30.

We have seen that born-again Christians have received a promise from God of three levels of good. These three levels of good are going to be brought to a believer no matter what sufferings he may experience in his lifetime in Satan's cursed world.

The first level of good is the good of positional sanctification. This is an irrevocable salvation which is provided by God as a gift, received through trusting in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior. Most Christians never get beyond level one. That is all the degree of good they ever are capable of receiving from God.

But some Christians go on to level two. The second level of good is experiential sanctification. The good of experiential sanctification is receiving the knowledge of Bible doctrine truth and the filling of the Holy Spirit which enables a believer to build a spiritual maturity structure in his soul to make him capable of producing divine good works for blessing in time and for rewards in heaven.

Some Christians go on to the capacity of level number three, which is ultimate sanctification. The good of ultimate sanctification is the believer in heaven with the resurrection body minus the sin nature and receiving rewards and crowns for the service which he has performed. Now, in one degree or another, all of us are going to enjoy one of these levels of good from God our Father. The ultimate that is promised in Romans 8:28 is the third level.

Now, the recipients of these ascending levels of good are believers who mature in their love for God. That's what enables you to go from one level to another, the progress in spiritual maturity. These are the people who develop a love for God by getting to know Him through the doctrines of scripture. The love it's speaking of here is that mental occupation with God which results in submission to His thinking instead of to our human viewpoint ideas. Only the maximum love of a mature believer can secure the maximum good of ultimate sanctification.

Now, this qualification for receiving God's good obviously immediately excludes all the carnal Christians. It excludes all those who have persisted in carnality so that they have reverted in their spiritual maturity and have started moving downward. It removes all those who are ignorant of the Word of God. It removes all those Christians whose Christian life is based on experience and emotion. So, this is a very specific group which is going to move on to the maximum good. All those who are doing their own thing in life are obviously excluded.

The God that we are told to love here, Romans 8:28. And we know, on the basis of information from God, that all the terrible things that happen in life are being fused and woven together for a good, to that specific group that love God.

The God we are talking about here is the Biblical God, the Creator, the personal God, existing in the form of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is characterized by very specific attributes. As we have seen, the God who is the sovereign God, the God who is absolute righteousness, who is perfect justice, who is love, who is eternal life, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, who is immutable, and who is absolute veracity.

Now, this, obviously, is not one of that gods that men have invented in their own sinful image. This is the God who really calls the plays, who really is out there and who cannot be deceived nor frustrated by human beings.

**Selfism**

Now, there is a great problem within the Christian community, because there is an enormous effort now and an enormous promotion of deviating our love from the God of the Bible to the God that we envision within ourselves. And now that you have been alerted to this, many of you have been coming and saying, "I'm hearing it every place. I'm reading books by Christian leaders that I thought I could really trust, and what am I finding? I'm finding a misdirected love as the solution to personal problems."

There is a new object of love being promoted within the Christian community, and you should realize that this has only happened within about the last twelve years. Previous to about 1974, there was nobody in the Christian community of any stature that would have ever thought of standing up before a Christian group and promoting the idea of self-love, promoting the idea of developing self-esteem, of telling Christians they must be concerned about their self-image. You just didn't hear talk like that. It was non-existent within the Christian community. It was in existence outside the Christian community but not within the context of those who were teachers of the Word of God.

Christians today are being taught by prominent teachers to love themselves as the means to the maximum good that God has promised to us. Self-love is presented as the key to personal happiness, personal success, personal prosperity, and personal productivity.

The connotation, the concept of self-love, has, of course, other descriptions. You should be aware of the fact that all these other terms for self-love have an emotional connotation. It's a feeling-based idea. Words like self-esteem, self-regard, self-worth, and positive self-imaging. Also, phrases like, "feeling good about yourself" and "liking yourself." All of these are expressions of the same concept that there is something within man that we must adjust to, something within ourselves that we must adjust to if we are going to be able to adjust to God and to other people. Self-love is defended by Christian leaders and teachers as necessary because, they say, terrible consequences flow from lack of loving yourself.

For example, one prominent Christian psychiatrist, Dr. James Dobson, in his book, "Hide or Seek," says this, on pages 12-13, "The matter of personal worth is not only the concern of those who lack it. In a real sense, the health of an entire society depends on the ease with which its individual members can gain personal acceptance. Thus, whenever the keys to self-esteem are seemingly out of reach for a large percentage of the people, as in twentieth century America, then widespread mental illness, neuroticism, hatred, alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, and social disorder will certainly occur."

Now, that's quite an amazing statement, isn't it? We are being told by this Christian leader that if you don't love yourself (Self-esteem. There's another word for it. "Self-esteem" has more of the emotional connotation. "Self-love" has more of the "I'm thinking and making decision" mental connotation.), but if you don't have self-love, that's why you hate people. That's why you're an alcoholic. That's why you're a drug abuser. It's because you don't have self-love that you resort to violence, to social disorder. Is that true? That's quite an amazing statement.

This is based upon the false premise, of course, that people, by nature, do not love themselves. And I'll tell you up-front that that is not a Biblical concept. Ephesians 5:29 stresses that when it says, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." Nobody ever hated himself. But he takes care of it and builds it up. Christian lack of self-love, it is said, is the consequence of the doctrine of total depravity. Because of the fact that the Bible teaches that in the fall, all parts of man's being became contaminated by sin so that he is totally depraved in his thinking, in his will, in his emotions. The result is that people do not like themselves.

This problem now is seen also, it has been pointed out in many of the hymns that are in our hymn book. For example, it has been pointed out that hymn number 55 in our hymn book has a very serious problem with the line in verse 1 that says, "Would he devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" And these Christian leaders are saying, "That's a bad line! That's a bad thought! It is conveying a bad impression about what we are. Worms?"

In Hymn number 57 in our hymn book, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus," some newer hymn books have now deleted from verse 2 the words, "in my unworthiness" as being unfit and unbecoming of a good self-image. And of course, verse 4 of "Beneath the Cross" is objected to because of the phrase, "my sinful self, my only shame." Now, that doesn't seem like a very good self-image. That doesn't seem like something that we can take a great deal of glory and of pride in, but indeed it is an apt and Biblical description. That's where these hymn writers got these words. And Isaac Watts, when he wrote, "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed," or as we know it also, "At the Cross," knew exactly what he was talking about theologically when he penned those words concerning the fact that we are worms.

**The Origins of the Concept of Selfism**

So, where did this idea of self-love come from? I can assure you that there is no such directive anywhere in the Bible. We have already looked at Matthew 22:37-39 about loving God and loving your neighbor and that the self-love promoters have added a third love that they see in there, even though Jesus used the word "two," the number two, as all that He was talking about, they say there is a third law. If you're going to love your neighbor as yourself, then you have to love yourself real good so that you can love your neighbor like that. But of course, that's not what it's saying. It's saying, "Love your neighbor as you already love yourself."

That is the principle that scripture lays down: that nobody ever existed who did not love himself and demonstrate that by wanting to take care of himself and supplying his needs and provide his necessities and to preserve himself and to preserve his very life.

This idea came into Christian circles something like twelve years ago from Christian leaders who drank at the muddied waters of secular psychology. It is secular psychology that came up with this idea of self-image as being a critical concern for a human being. Before the era of the Renaissance, God and scriptures were viewed as essential for the well-being of all mankind. And, we had that as a frame of reference. Before the Renaissance, there was a God out there. Before the Renaissance, people looked at the Bible and said, "That is the way God speaks to us, and that Bible is the guidelines for us to be able to be normal, stable, productive human beings."

But since the Renaissance with its advancements in learning and science, western society decided that it did not need God for human progress and for human happiness. It did not need God, and it did not need His Bible. Man had now discovered his own marvelous reasoning capacity. He could make it, and he could do it on his own.

But there was a problem. Without God, the spiritually ignorant intellectuals have no explanation for the origin of matter and of life forms. And they had to start with that. They had no need for God anymore; man could do it on his own. But there was a problem. We can't say, "There's no God out there," because then we have no explanation for the material universe and these life forms.

**Deism**

So, they came up with a solution. They came up with the philosophy of deism. The philosophy of Deism stated that God indeed created the universe and the life forms but having done that, He left the room. He walked off the scene. He turned His back and preoccupied Himself elsewhere with other things, and He left what He had created in the hands of mankind to run from then on. So that, in this way, God was out of the way. They had an explanation for why things existed as they are, and yet, now, they could get on with human progress through science and human reason.

In time, Darwin came along and picked up an idea that had been floating around since ancient times, an idea called evolution. He did some scientific research and some travel, and he sat down and he consolidated all these ideas on evolution that had been floating around and gave them a purported scientific base as the result of his travels and his experiments. And he came up, finally, with his book on the subject of evolution. When he did that, the intellectuals immediately latched onto it. That book came out, and it was sold before it hardly hit the bookstores. It was immediately grasped by all the ignorant intellectuals as the answer they had been look for as the final problem they faced: getting rid of God, too. With evolution, they didn't have any need for God as well as the Bible.

And so, that was immediately latched onto. They did not bother explaining the question any more than Darwin did as to where the original matter that evolution worked with came from. They just shoved that way back in the distant, immeasurable past, and in fact, said, "It always existed." Matter always existed. This is what Communism teaches today. This is where Communism got it. And then, chance organized eternal matter into the life forms as we have it today. And so, what, in effect, happened was they not only got rid of God, they also transformed the material things that God had made into deity itself. And man became God.

Romans 1:23 tell us that very thing. As people degenerated from their knowledge of God, it says they "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." What God had created, the material creation of God, itself became God in the hands of these ignorant intellectuals. Verse 25 says, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature [the creation] more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

Man, under this system, was now viewed as simply absolute highest form of animal evolution, but that's all he was. He was just an animal. Now, the popularity of this evolution, of course, continues today not because it is scientific (because it has been amply demonstrated how unscientific it is). It continues in popularity with ignorant intellectuals because it is the only answer, the only means to eliminate a supernatural God. It gives them what was desired by the people of the Renaissance to get rid of God, and to get rid of His authority, and to get rid of His presence, and to get rid of Him looking over their shoulders, and to get rid of the concept that they were accountable to Him. With evolution, you can get rid of that supernatural authority, and that's why evolution is still popular today, permitting man to be his own god.

So, man now had the universe all to himself, and he proceeded to mold it into his own sinful image with all the disastrous consequences in the world today. Here was a world now where there was no one to account to beyond man himself. No one say what is right or wrong. Man himself had lost his dignity as a creation of God in the image of God, so he was treated as a mere biological machine. He was one of the animals.

The result of this was the "God is Dead" movement of a few years ago where people were confidently declaring that the Biblical God was dead, by which they meant that He was no longer relevant. They didn't need Him anymore. Man had now come to the point where God, in effect, as people know Him, through the Bible, as a non-entity. He's dead.

The inevitable expression, however, of man's sin nature soon put an end to the optimism of man as an evolving God capable of doing good for all. The system broke down because man with all of his brilliant reasoning that brought great scientific progress, great technology, great improvement in human life, could not override the sin nature in man. And the sin nature in man expressed itself and undermined this optimistic view of what the world could be without God.

**Existentialism**

Life without God, life without the Word of God. Man had burned his bridges to God and to the reformation and enlightenment of scripture, and he had to go it alone. But, that left him without any objective truth. No basis to guide him. He had no place to go but back into himself, so he resorted to subjective feelings: finding truth by how he felt about things. The result of this was a new philosophy, and that was a philosophy you've heard about: existentialism. Exist, the moment, is a key point of that. Existentialism. No God. No objective basis of guidance in the scriptures. Man on his own, but man blowing it because his sin nature dominates him, and he can't control it.

So, along came the philosophy of existentialism. With no objective, rational basis to govern one's action, we were told that man is now free to seek fulfillment in any way that he wants to. The principle of existentialism is to intensify the moment, to make yourself aware of the experience of the moment. That was expressed by such expressions as, "being there." Intensify the experience of the moment, thus all you should concern yourself with. And so, people resorted to drugs to intensify the experience of the moment. To the occult, in order to expand their consciousness of the moment, people are free to do whatever feels good no matter what the objective evidence exists about what the bad consequences will be.

So, go ahead and be a homosexual, even though you now run the consequences of contracting AIDS. Go ahead and use drugs, even though you run the consequences of blowing your mind and experiencing death. Go ahead and smoke, even though you run the consequences of cancer. To the existentialists, the objective evidence doesn't mean anything. There's only one thing that's important: this moment in time.

This is where I am. Here is where I am, and I'm going to be there by intensifying this moment, and I am not going to be concerned about how this moment is going to connect to the next one. And I sure don't care how this moment has connected to anything in the past. I don't care who I am. I don't care what my family is. I don't care what my heritage is, what my background has stood for. I'm only interested in myself and this moment, and I will do that that intensifies my desires right now.

Existentialism, in effect, promoted extreme self-orientation: the demand of the right to do one's own thing, to define what fulfills you, and to achieve it any way that you could. In all of this, there was no concern whatsoever for how what one is doing might harm somebody else. If what you did helped somebody else, that was an accident. You didn't care whether it did or not.

This, you see, was the mental outlook of the college-age young people of the sixties. This is where they were coming from. It is the attempt of existentialism to get a basis for living and for operating once man had abandoned the objective standards of the Word of God and the God who had created him, and he was on his own. So, the only course was complete self-orientation.

Existentialism, furthermore, observed that science cannot explain the universe as far as its rational purpose is concerned. So that, existentialism said, "There is no meaning." Why am I here? There is no purpose for my being alive. There is no meaning. And the extreme existential philosophers actually said, "There's only one question really in life, and that's to decide when I'm going to commit suicide." There's no purpose. There's no connection. There's no direction. The only decision, really, for me is, "When am I going to cut it all off?" Existentialism believes only the moment counts, because if you say that what I do today might affect what happens tomorrow, that suggests that there is a purpose, and that suggests that there is a rational God out there who is ordering things around and calling the plays. You have begun with the fact that there's nobody out there running things. Therefore, you cannot say that what you do today is in any way going to affect your situation tomorrow. The only thing that counts is your satisfaction at the moment since it can have no effect on tomorrow. So, go ahead, break the moral code; it doesn't matter.

The basic characteristic, you see, of existentialism is selfishness. Man, of course, is by nature self-centered, so the existentialist gave him a justification for being what he naturally is. Have you ever heard somebody [who] says, "I have to be me?" Why? You're lousy! You stink! You're depraved! Why do you have to be you? That's the last thing on earth you should want to be.

Why don't you be like the Apostle Paul that could stand up tall and straight and say, "I am what I am by the grace of God. Once, I was a rat, a real worm, but God has made me something in the image of His Son. Who says you have to be yourself? That's the worst thing in the world. But existentialism, because it is selfish-oriented, pressures that this is what you must be to be yourself. And existentialism gave man the justification for being what he already is. It made him feel free of the controls of his heredity and environment to set his own course and his own values.

Well, the confident college students of the existential era found in time that it does not work. Existentialism in practice does not work because there really are moral laws that govern the universe. There really is a God who exists out there and who judges the violators of His rules. And doing your own thing, furthermore, sooner or later, runs into conflict with somebody else's own thing. Society demands that you play by certain stated objective rules or it imposes consequences for your violation.

I remember Bob Lee one time telling me in Alaska that he had met a young hippie who looked like a hippie with all the long hair and all the accoutrements making his way to something. And sometime later, he ran into him on the highway again thumbing a ride. And he said the guy's hair was short. He was cleaned up. He looked nice, clean-shaven, everything. When he got in the car, Bob Lee says, "Boy, do you look different! What happened?" He says, "Survival, man. Survival!"

And in Alaska, it's tough to survive at best! But he found that there were rules that society said you were going to play by. There are standards. You can violate them, but you are going to bear the consequences. And the existentialist who says, "I have a right to do my own thing because there's nobody out there to judge me or to call the plays," found that indeed, it doesn't work in practice. He is forced to subject himself to society's standards at certain points or suffer the consequences.

**Secular Psychology**

So now, the existentialist was in quite a bind as to who he was, what he was, and how he was to act after he thought he had it made. And, enter stage right, secular psychology with the answer. Psychology picked up the fact that now the existentialist was in a schizophrenic position. He was pretending to be a god who could do whatever he feels like doing, and yet being forced to subject himself to the rules of society.

So, psychology sought to solve this conflict that was being created in people. And they did it by reassuring fallen man that he has great personal capacities to make it on his own and that he is worth loving as he is. People were told that they're ok in their sinful, lost condition, dominated by the lust patterns of the sin nature. So, consequently, secular psychology says a way to solve your problems, this conflict you have within yourself and society, is for you to love yourself and to have good feelings about yourself and who you are and what you are.

And so, people had been led to believe is what really counts is having real-life experiences, emotional orientation experiences, because you're ok. It doesn't matter what the doctrinal content is on subject. That's minimized as secondary.

This is seen in the charismatic movement which doesn't care about doctrine but it cares about experience of the moment. This is shown by how many Christians are running to Christian bookstores and the books they're buying. You know what they're buying? These sweet, little devotional books. Devotional stories that are heart-to-heart, not mind-to-mind with content of scripture. Give you a little story. Give you a little cute talk. Give you a little inspirational page or two for your day. Those are selling like hotcakes. And the boys in the ministry who want to make big money, they write devotional books because they know that we have a society that's oriented to eating that stuff up on the delusion that somehow they're developing spiritually and going someplace in their lives.

Well, secular psychology said the destructive actions of your life are the result of your low self-esteem. So, learn to love yourself. Why do you hate people? Because you don't love yourself. Why do you have illicit sex? Because you don't love yourself. Your alcoholism, your drug addition, your violence, your stealing, your lying, your cheating: these are not the product of an inherent sin nature. This is the result of the fact that you don't love yourself. If you had an esteem for yourself, you wouldn't do these things.

So, the promotion was not repentance and confession and positive volition to the Word of God, but the solution was, "Love yourself." Your esteem for yourself will remove this evil conduct. And secular psychology declared that people with good self-esteem will do what they innately know is right to do. Secular psychology said, "You are on the right track when you had confidence in man's capacities and man's rational abilities. You do know what is right to do. You don't need anybody to tell you what's right to do. You know that innately. You'll do what is right, and so you'll remove these conflicts with society."

And so, psychology defends self-love on the basis of the fact that a person is lovable. Everybody is lovable. Why? Well, because everybody is human. Well, what makes you lovable is just because you're a human being or because every human being, the secular psychologist says, is inherently good (the mafia-type person and the preacher type person). Now, the Bible says that's not true. Just 'cause they're human, they're not all inherently good at all. That's not true. Secular psychology says, "You are lovable irrespective of what you do." Doesn't matter whether you do something good or something bad. You're lovable."

You see, in existentialism, this principle would be expressed with the idea that here you are standing at the street corner with your car ready to cross through when the light changes. And here comes the little doddering old lady carrying her basket of groceries home, and she gets up to the light, and she starts crossing it right after the light changes. Now, as an existentialist, to expand the significance of your moment, you can do two things. You can sit there and let her dodder across the street with her bag of groceries, or as soon as she gets in front of you, you can ram on the gas and run her down. It doesn't matter which one you do as long as you have an experience, that you have expanded the moment. That's all that counts.

And this was the idea that you're lovable. Hey, that's what you are: you're lovable. What you do is irrelevant to that. Now, since one is by nature lovable, and since, no matter what you do, you're still lovable, it does make sense that you should love yourself. And you should love yourself so you have the capacity to love other people and benefit them. The argument is that if you can't love yourself, you certainly can't give love to anybody else, which, of course, is not true at all and certainly is not a Biblical concept even though there are some Christian leaders making such nonsensical statements that if you don't love yourself, you can't love your wife. That is not true, because self-love does not lead to good things; it leads to bad things in your experience with other people.

But Christians are being told to pursue self-love in order to straighten out their mental and emotional disorders. Romans 8:28 has told us that the maximum good comes from God to those that love that real and true God out there. You see the switch? Instead, we are told not to be loving that God as the solution to our problems but to seek to love ourselves. But this is a call to selfishness, and people naturally respond to it. The essence of self-love, of course, is pride, pride which refuses to submit to God's authority and to acknowledge our dependence on Him. The more you love yourself, the less you want to listen to God. The more you love yourself, the more you will feel superior to God and to everybody else. That's what self-love leads to; it leads to pride.

**A Biblical Perspective of Ourselves**

But the Word of God is completely different. The Bible says, "Don't exalt yourself. Don't pursue pride. That's bad." And when self-love produces pride (which it does), then obviously, self-love is a bad thing. James 4:10 puts it this way, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." Humble yourself. Do the things that enable you to have a true perspective of the worm that you are.

1 Peter 5:6 puts it this way, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Pride produces evil things, from what it did to Satan in eternity past right down to this day.

Now, the Bible has a different way. The Bible does not teach us to focus on ourselves in order to create some image. That's point number one. The Bible never tells you to focus on yourself in any way. It doesn't tell you to focus on yourself in self-deprecation. The Bible doesn't tell you to focus on yourself in self-exaltation, either. Self-hatred and self-love are both self-centered attitudes. The Bible does not tell you to hate yourself; the Bible does not tell you to love yourself. The Bible way, instead, is to focus outwardly away from yourself toward God.

Hebrews 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." And looking outward toward other people, toward man, Philippians 2:4, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." So that, these two passages, which could be multiplied to make it very clear the Christian's focus is toward God and toward other people but never does the Bible tell you to focus on yourself in developing self-love or self-esteem or self-worth or anything else.

To be others-oriented, however, is not a natural characteristic. It is the product of doctrine and of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. What the Bible teachers is that confessing sins to God the Father and forgetting them is the pattern that we are to follow in order to focus on God, not to look at yourself, how terrible you are, but to look upon God, how wonderful He is.

In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended [to have arrived]: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind [because I've confessed those bad things to God the Father], and reaching forth unto those things which are before [all the good things that He has in store for me to do], I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus [the high calling of rewards and crowns in heaven]."

The Christian's path is to follow the Word of God and to be subject to the Lord Jesus Christ and actually to leave even the evaluation of your performance to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 4:3-4, Paul says, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea [Paul says], I judge not mine own self." I'm not self-centered even to be judging and evaluating what I am doing in God's service. I'm listening to Him. I'm obedient to the Word. I'm responsive to the Spirit of God, and that's my guideline. Verse 4, he says, "For I know nothing against myself; yet I am not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord." It is the Lord who is going to make the decision about my worth.

When man's focus shifted from God to Himself, troubles began. That shift began at the very earliest days of the human race. In Genesis 3:7-11, you have the record that shows us that self-focus is the product of man's sinfulness, not of divine guidance. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they did not focus on themselves. Their image was not an issue. They only focused on God. They looked forward to those evening hours when the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ was going to come into the garden to fellowship with them and to teach them the Word of God, the principles of divine viewpoint. They just looked out toward God all the time. They were never looking at themselves in terms of some image. But, notice what happens.

Verse 7, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Both of them had previously been naked, but they were not self-conscious about that. After they sinned, they were immediately self-conscious about that. Immediately, the focus went from God to themselves and their image.

Once they had focused on themselves, now they are ready to hide from God. Verse 10, "And he said [Adam said], 'I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" Now, an emotional factor comes in: the emotion of fear. Focus on self was an emotional expression. It was a variant of the emotion of self-love. Before the fall, both of them were unselfish. No preoccupation with self-image or whether they had self-esteem. Both were centered outwardly on God so they didn't need to worry about their self-image.

God has even constructed, you may have noticed, the human body in such a way that he placed your eyes in a position where you can't look at yourself physically as a whole. You can look at parts, but unless you have some reflecting device like a mirror, you can't look at yourself. Almost like God is saying, "I'm not interested in you focusing on yourself." Try focusing on yourself all at once, and you'll be visiting your eye doctor. You're just not constructed to do that.

Soon created this self-occupation in mankind, and with it came the loss of preoccupation with God. So, now, man had an image problem that he did not have before. How did he handle it? He saw his bad image. He realized what had happened to himself, and he tried to cover it up with those fig leaves and is still trying to cover it up today. And currently, Christians are being told to cover it up by self-love, self-esteem, and all the rest. High esteem for yourself leads to pride. A low esteem leads to fear. It's a bummer either way.

So, what's God's solution for our self-image? The solution is this: salvation through Jesus Christ to release us from preoccupation from looking at our guilt and from preoccupation with the effort to find meaning in life because He gives us meaning. Christians do not look inward to feel good, bad, or indifferent. They just don't look inward if they're mature Christians. Christians look outward with awe to God. We love Him with our mental attitude devotion that brings honor and glory to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:20 says, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." So, we look at God in order to glorify Him. Feelings of inferiority are never solved by creating more problems with the concept of self-love pride. And that's what secular psychology has been telling us and which Christianity has been picking up.

It is the Christian duty to take up his cross, his mission in life, and to do it in God's strength - not to make himself feel good. Luke 9:23 gives that admonition. Take up your cross. Execute your duty, and do not be preoccupied with yourself, looking at yourself inwardly.

Well, it's no surprise to see the self-love concept which is condemned in scripture become the prime concept of humanistic psychology at this point in time, just before our Lord returns to this earth. That's exactly what 2 Timothy 3 tell us is the time that this is going to come to the forefront. The thing that is sad is to see Christian teachers promoting the same poison. I hope you will have now a better appreciation of Satan's line of deceit.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

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