

Find Yourself, Give Yourself by Dick Wulf (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1983)
(26 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Godly Self-respect

A Godly self-respect is impossible without a personal relationship with God. [Page 11]

2. Each Has a Part Assigned by God

...we need to build within the people of the church a godly self-respect, the kind of self-identity that will bring about the attitude and action of a spiritually militant people. A sense of truly righteous self-respect--both collective and individual--is vitally important if the church is to take its powerful role in the spiritual battle throughout the world.

The work of the church is too critical a matter for its members to evade just because they feel small, useless, and incapable of vital service. We must each be ready to do our own part as assigned by God. In order to do so, we need to make a courageous effort to change our thinking about ourselves--to see ourselves as God's people, without a spirit of fear. We should rather be fortified by a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). [Page 18]

3. You Are Unique

God states in his word that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). We're called God's "workmanship" (Ephesians 2: 10); the word "poem" is derived from the Greek word translated "workmanship" in this verse. You are God's work of art--his poem, not his riddle. When you are able to appreciate yourself for your own godly uniqueness, then you are ready to serve God as he intended you to serve him. [page 20]

4. Shaped into God's Image

What exactly is the self-image we should possess? A definition is in order. I have avoided the term "self-esteem" because of the possible connotation of placing oneself on a pedestal. Instead, I constantly refer to godly self-respect. By this I mean a redeemed person's biblical identity put into action--the kind of life we can respect because God respects it. When you as a Christian consider the fact that your life was formed from its beginning by Jesus Christ and that he continues to shape you into his own image, then you can begin to feel good about yourself. It is true that you are not perfect, but you are in the midst of a spiritual growth process toward that end. [Pages 20-21]

5. The World Needs Salt, Not Sugar. [Page 22]

6. Stand Firm and Resist

Don't consider the battle for godly self-respect to be easy. You should know from your own life how difficult it is to think rationally about yourself. It is far easier to tell yourself untrue, negative things about your capabilities. In the same way, it is difficult to get others to see in themselves those positive qualities that are so obvious to you.

But we are to be strong people, not afraid of difficult tasks. We are not to run from Satan, but to stand firm and resist him (James 4:7, I Peter 5:9) and to be aware of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 6:11). Our spiritual salt needs to be spread strategically throughout our world. So join in the battle, and seek that wonderful taste of victory! God becomes more and more glorified when his people have godly self-respect in their attitudes and actions with one another and within the world. [Page 23]

7. Rejoice When Someone Does Well

When we are confronted with someone who is really good at something, we should rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:25-26), rather than feel bad about ourselves. We do not necessarily need to possess that other person's strength to be worthwhile Christians. Inferior feelings often lead us to focus too much attention on ourselves, thus causing our failure to perceive the needs of others--something which takes a lot of concentration. In such a case, we consequently miss opportunities to help, even in areas where we feel competent. [Page 24]

8. You Have a Job from God

"the Lord has assigned to each his task" (1 Corinthians 3:5) [page 25]

9. Ministry of Help and Reconciliation

We have not been given the ministry of judgment--that is reserved for Jesus Christ himself (John 5:22, 27). But we have been given the ministry of helping and reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5: 17-21). [Page 25]

10. Christians Plugged in to the Life of the Church

The symbiotic relationship between the individual Christian and the church is a built-in means for developing self-respect in both of them. The individual Christian should have his life plugged into the life of the church, whereas the church should be

cumulatively affected by the lives of its individual members. Through such a symbiosis, self-respect spirals upward. [page 27]

11. Ambassador to the World, Minister to Fellow Christians

Therefore, a strong church is a church where each member feels and acts like God's ambassador to the world and his minister to fellow Christians. Such a strong body becomes a powerful force to be reckoned with in the world because it is changing things. So you see, self-respect is not an either-or proposition between attitudes and actions, but a combination of both, resulting in dynamic spiritual results. [Page 27]

12. Being Together

I'm not saying that Christians should not have fun, but that we should define enjoyment in the context of what is important to God. Fun should be a spiritual rest, not a churchy occupation or preoccupation. As Christians we should look forward to being together and bearing one another's burdens more than we should look forward to fishing, hunting, skiing, or watching television. We should put far more energy into establishing godly characteristics than we should put into the athletic prowess of our youth or the business success of our adults.

Too many Christians seek employment opportunities which are "self-fulfilling."

What happened to the curse of God upon mankind for its self-seeking disobedience? Don't we believe what God told Adam when he kicked him out of the Garden of Eden? But many of us are spoiled--we want jobs that are pleasurable, with short hours and two day weekends. The reason the Sabbath is generally meaningless as a day of rest is that we've been resting all week long--resting in front of television sets and in our social gatherings.

A Christina with godly self-respect will be content to work at the place of employment given by God. Changes in employment will be made in the context of furthering the cause of God in some way. Considerations of more money and pleasure will consequently be less important in decisions concerning job changes. The importance of employment should be to support one's basic needs and to serve God in a particularly assigned place of work. [pages 28-29]

13. Have a Spirit of Adventure with God

We Christians should never buy into such compromising lifestyles and philosophies. We should not be so obsessed with comfort, safety, and pleasure that we become completely disinterested in dangerous assignments from God. We must regain a spirit of adventure. Perhaps we should think back to the times in the past when people lived for causes that were important, whether that cause was working to feed one's family, marching against an enemy, or bringing about some necessary social change. [Page 30]

14. Now Is the Time for Service

God wanted us to be purified by the fire of service for him in a different kind of world. What a joy to look at it this way: to say, "I'm still on earth--not because God doesn't want me to go to heaven, but because before I get there he wants to make sure I become more like Christ. Then I can enjoy heaven to a greater degree and be more thankful for my relationship with him."

Heaven is for later. We don't really need to surround ourselves with luxury and all sorts of "things." This is a time for service, a time to feel good about ourselves, to know our strengths and our callings, and to valiantly battle against sin. [Pages 30-31]

15. Find Pleasure in Doing His Assignments

God does not want us to seek after pleasure and comfort. He wants us to find our pleasure and self-fulfillment in doing his assignments. [page 31]

16. Suffering Makes Us Stronger

Suffering is not something which should rob us of self-respect, but rather it should make us stronger, thus leading to more confidence and self-respect. Suffering is actually something we should look upon with optimism. Unfortunately, we live in a day and age when most people want to convert earth into heaven. People pursue things and pleasure, and comfort is a mark of success. {Page 33]

17. Do What He Has Called Us

God doesn't expect us to do what we were not designed to do, but he does expect us to do what he has called us to do. Our Creator wants us, in this sense, to help bring to fruition the purpose of our very creation.

Let's do it! Let's turn away from the idolatry of comfort, pleasure, self, and money! Let's move out individually, cooperatively, and boldly into this hurting world. God's assignment to us is to take care of the world and have dominion over it. So let's be determined to feel good about ourselves and confident about our commission.

We need to let God's confidence in us be expressed through us to all the hurting people in our lives who need our help. Let's become so strong that we are world Christians - people big enough to take on the whole world for the Lord, not just in the area of evangelism, but also in the area of spreading God's mercy. Let's be all that God made us to be! [page 33]

18. Self-denial

The critical ingredient in Christlike behavior is self-denial. Just as Jesus Christ denied himself, so should we consider others better than ourselves~ this should be a guideline for our priorities and behaviors. Our strengths are given for the benefit of others. A godly self-respect requires the priority treatment of others through those strengths. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10).

God asks his people to have a loving behavior toward others, but he also requires a godly attitude about people. It is only logical that loving attitudes beget loving behaviors. (Ephesians 4:2) [page 36]

19. Our Roles in God's Kingdom

As God's ambassador of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5: 17-21), you reach out with God's understanding and his ministry to touch their needs with his love. If you encourage, you build courage. If you confront, you build holiness. If you cook a meal, you build health. If you give financial aid, you build trust in God's provision. If you confess your own sin, you build humility in another by your example. If you share a personal struggle, you build up someone else's ministry. And the list could go on and on. [page 37]

20. Designed to be with Others

When we correctly interpret the behavior of others, things usually run smoothly in our personal relationships. But when we misinterpret, we may withdraw from or strike out at a good friend, with unfortunate results. On the other extreme, if we see positive motives where they do not exist, we may end up granting a trust in a relationship that

should not be trusted, setting ourselves up for an emotional hurt by adopting unrealistic expectations of the friendship.

Therefore, it is vitally important to work at interpreting the behavior of others correctly. This takes a lot of effort! But the Lord gave us other people to help in this challenge. By purposefully creating us incomplete, God designed us to be with others. [page 43]

21. Seek Advice

The input and criticism of good men is extremely valuable. Unfortunately, most of us shy away, or even run away, from criticism. As our godly self-respect grows, however, we will more assertively seek out criticism. Criticism should not automatically rob us of self-respect. Our attitude about critical input can marshal its power for our own good, even when criticism is offered by an enemy! [Page 44]

22. Examine Blind Spots

The Bible points out that wise men seek counsel and critical examination of their lives. "Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise" (Proverbs 19:20). Wisdom comes from examination of the blind spots. Unfortunately, looking at blind spots feels uncomfortable. But it is not dangerous--just the opposite. You are in serious danger when you are not willing to confront your blind spots. [page 44-45]

23. Questions and Agreements

When someone criticizes us, we should try to remember several things: (1) we always have worth in God's eyes; (2) there is always something we can learn from criticism, whether or not it is valid; and (3) it is good to grow in self-knowledge, even through criticism, for it helps us to serve the Lord more effectively. We should learn everything we can from what others tell us, even if it hurts sometimes.

If you want to grow through criticism, there are two basic ways to respond: questioning and agreement. When you respond with questions, ask for specifics. Let the other person know you sincerely want more information, making it clear that you assume he wants to help you. [Page 45]

24. God Accepts You as You Are

How you react to criticism is a good barometer of how your godly self-respect is progressing. The more you understand yourself as acceptable and worthwhile, and the

more you live in tune with God's word and your ministry here on earth, the less often you will be vulnerable to criticism. In other words, the more you get upset inside: fuming, wondering, feeling bad about yourself, dragging yourself over the coals for days--the less godly your self-respect will be. Such reactionary behavior means you are still trying to prove your worth--that you are not satisfied with God's acceptance of you as worthwhile even though you are a sinner.

Let me exhort you to begin to see criticism differently. Realize that you are basically all right the way you are! When people begin to criticize you, don't let it destroy your self-worth. God doesn't see you in any different light just because someone is criticizing you. He accepts you as you are: a sinner forgiven by Christ's loving death on the cross. [Page 47]

25. Gift of Friends

God has given you the gift of friends so that you can ask them how to do things or seek their opinions about your plans. "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed" (proverbs 15:22). If you continue to seek the counsel and criticism of others, they will give you their straightforward reaction--and then your self-respect will grow. [page 48]

26. Exhortation

The three phases of exhortation are rebuking, challenging, and encouragement. When you exhort your friend, you can (a) rebuke him for his sin and self-condemnation, (b) challenge him to use his strengths in ministry to others and (c) encourage his efforts to serve Christ in a ministry and to accept himself as he is. [page 61]