



# Healing Hints

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## Should You Love Yourself?

People's attitudes toward themselves span a full range of possibilities from narcissism (extreme self-love), on the one extreme, to despising themselves, on the other extreme. Either extreme is likely to generate difficulties. A sound view of self is essential for personal security and healthy relationships with others. Let's face it, the "wimp" is no better off than the egotist! Our ability to love others is deeply rooted in our ability to accept and love ourselves. If we see self as having value, we will, then, be able to use that value as a secure basis from which to approach and serve others. To love others, we must first love ourselves.

The Bible supports the idea of self-worth from two perspectives: *First*, if it is true that God loves us, then valuing self is valuing what God loves. *Second*, the Bible says, "No one ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, *because we are members of his body*" (Ephesians 5:29-30). That is, the reason Christ loves us is that he considers that we are part of himself. If we care about ourselves, then we will certainly care about whatever becomes a part of us; that is, we will care for friends, spouse, children, parents, and community. Gloria (Mrs. Marple) cares for me because (at least partly) I have in some manner become a part of her. That is why she doesn't want me going out in public without taking a bath and putting on a clean shirt; *she doesn't want to look bad!*

This year, Gloria bought me some new dress shoes for Christmas. I felt like the old ones still had a good thousand miles left in them. So, why did she buy them? It was because she is *Mrs. Marple* and *she doesn't want to look bad!* It is impossible to separate love of others from love of self. In this manner, one's capacity to love others is directly related to a healthy self-worth.

People who are satisfied with themselves, including their limits, and have become comfortable with how God made them, do a good job of loving other people from that secure position. People with stable self-worth can even survive personal insults without going into the defensive posture that often separates us from each other. If you have trouble loving others, perhaps you need to, first, accept the love and value that God has placed on you! On the other hand it is important that "one does not think more highly of him or her self than he or she ought to think" (Romans 12:3). But, let's save that for another visit. Until then, remember, God expects you to be the person He made you to be! There are so many good things that you can do. Sure, God didn't do a bad job after all!