

EQUAL STANDING IN CHRIST: There is no room for inferiority. All believers have the same inheritance in Christ. Every believer is blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). There is no "respect of persons" (James 2:1-13). All have the same privileges of prayer (Hebrews 4:14-16). All have the same access to the spiritual riches of wisdom and understanding in Christ (James 1:2-8; Col. 2:3). All have the same position of authority in Christ (Eph. 2:5-10). All are free from any condemnation on the day of judgment (Rom. 8:1). It has been said that the ground is level at the foot of the cross! Our standing in Christ frees us from the paralyzing attitudes of inferiority and the destructive attitudes of pride and superiority.

CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is a high priest who can sympathize with those who battle inferiority feelings (Hebrews 4:13-16). He was "...despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Is. 53:3). The Lord Jesus had many strikes against him when measured by the world's estimation of success and value. But in his humble acceptance of the Father's will for His life he secured salvation for all those who will believe on Him (Jn. 1:12). Consider the following facts about Jesus life in evaluating your own value to God and overcoming inferiority.

1 He lived in the shadow of illegitimacy. Jesus virgin birth was not believed or accepted by everyone. He lived with the stinging accusations of others about his birth (Jn. 8:41).

2 He was born in a stable and grew up in a city despised by fellow Israelites. When Philip invited Nathanael to meet Christ, Nathanael responded, "...Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46).

3 His family tree included the harlots Tamar and Rahab as well as the adultery of Bathsheba (Matt. 1:1-17).

4 He was a prophet without honor even among his friends and brethren (Mark 3:21,32 Jn. 7:5).

5 His appearance was simple and without worldly attraction: "...He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Is. 53:2).

6 His death was a public shame. The time and circumstances were according to the Father's will. The method of crucifixion was the most painful and ruthless procedure devised by man (Gal. 4:4 3:13).

7 He was accused of being a gluttonous man and a winebibber (Matt. 11:19).

Each of these facts listed, illustrate that our Lord faced many occasions whereby he could have developed a sense of inferiority. But He recognized that each of these events and many others, were all ordained by His heavenly Father for the carrying out of the Father's eternal plan of redemption in His life. May God give you the grace to recognize your value and importance in the eternal plans and purposes of God, so that you may be a good ambassador for the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

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What is humility? Humility is recognizing my dependency on God and on His Son Jesus Christ if any good is to come out of my life (Jn. 15:5, Rom. 7:24,25). Humility is proper and absolutely vital to a Christian's spiritual health. But some people confuse humility with inferiority. Attitudes of inferiority are destructive and hinder our spiritual potential in serving Christ. What is inferiority? Inferiority is comparing myself to others and concluding that I have little or nothing to offer to God. A person with this attitude soon becomes passive in serving Christ and struggles throughout his lifetime with feelings of inadequacy. Below are listed some of the causes of inferiority and the Biblical principles to overcome it.

WRONG RESPONSE TO FAILURE: A man who had less than three years of formal education failed in business in '31, was defeated for the legislature in '32, again failed in business in '33, was elected to the legislature in '34, defeated for speaker in '38, defeated for elector in '40, defeated for Congress in '43, elected to Congress in '46 and defeated in '48, defeated for Senate in '55, defeated for the Vice Presidential nomination in '56, defeated for the Senate in '58. This same man (Abraham Lincoln) in 1860 was elected to the Presidency of the United States and became one of the most respected leaders in history. A man is not a failure; until when he fails, he gives up. A just man may fall seven times, but the Lord is always faithful to cause him to rise up again (Prov. 24:16). It is significant that Christians are compared to palm trees (Ps. 92:12). The high winds and storms that easily break other trees, only cause the palm tree to bend, and then spring back after the storm is past. When the storms of life blow against us, we may bend with the pressure and sometimes experience failure, but we never break!

WRONG EVALUATION OF MY ABILITY: The little boy that gave his five loaves and two fishes to Jesus didn't have much to offer, but when he placed it in the hands of the Savior; Jesus multiplied it so that there was 12 full baskets left over (Mark 6:32-44). "Little is much when God is in it". It's not my ABILITY that is of primary importance, but my AVAILABILITY to God. One day God said to Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" (Ex. 4:2). Moses answered, "Lord it's just an ordinary shepherd's rod". God instructed Moses to cast it on the ground. When Moses obeyed, the rod turned into a serpent. The significance of this account is that when Moses surrendered to God the little he had to offer, God then took it and marvelously showed His power through it. That rod was no longer called Moses' rod, but the ROD OF GOD (Ex. 4:20). It was God's power revealed through that rod that wrought deliverance for the nation of Israel. God delights in showing His power made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). Consider the following poem which illustrates how the value of something changes when it is placed into the Master's hand.

Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while,
To waste much time with the old violin
As he held it up with a smile.

Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
And going for three." But no!
From the room far back a gray haired man
"Came forward and picked up the bow.

"What am I bid, good folks?" he cried
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar, now two
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

And wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening up the strings,
He played a melody, pure and sweet,
Sweet as an angel sings.

THE RESULTS OF THE FALL: Because of Adam's sin, each person conceived in the mother's womb is born with a sin nature. David wrote "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). Sin has corrupted every aspect of man's personality. Man doesn't become a sinner when he sins, man sins because he is a sinner! Even the most highly educated man will manifest sinful selfish ways. Even the good that comes forth out of a man's life is tainted by selfish motives and ambitions, and not out of an allegiance to God (Phil. 3:1-9). Man's will naturally chooses to serve the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). God describes the mind of a man apart from Christ: "...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed, can be" (Rom. 8:7). Because of man's sinful nature, He does not seek after God, but goes his own stubborn independent way (Rom. 3:11).

RESTORATION FROM THE FALL - GOD'S PART: Man, made in the image and likeness of God and once the crown of creation is helpless to restore himself to a right relationship to God. An unsaved man is "dead in trespasses and sins". He is a slave to sin and loves himself more than God and is inclined to every evil way (Eph. 2:1-4). He stands guilty of breaking God's commandments (Rom. 3:19), is subject to God's wrath (Eph. 2:3; Jn. 3:36), is now an enemy of God (Col. 1:21) and faces eternal separation from God in hell (2 Thessalonians 1:8,9). God knew before the foundation of the world that man would be found in a helpless lost condition (Eph. 1:3-6). In His great love and mercy God provided a way by which man's guilt could be canceled, fellowship with His Creator restored and the Lord's wrath removed (Eph. 2:14-18; Rom. 5:6-11). Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God was born of a virgin to be the Savior of the world (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-33). His birth and life were sinless (2 Cor. 5:21)! His death by crucifixion was not because of his own sin, but because he bore in his body the sins of the whole world (1 Peter 2:24). By His perfect life and substitutionary death, the Lord Jesus satisfied the just demands of God's holiness and righteousness. He became a propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3:25). God's wrath and judgment upon sin has been justly satisfied and appeased by the precious sinless blood of the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary (1 Peter 1:18,19). As a result God can forgive sinners and restore them to favor without violating His own holiness (Rom. 3:25).

RESTORATION FROM THE FALL - MAN'S PART: When a person recognizes that he is a sinner, justly deserving God's judgment, the restoration process has begun. The humble sinner who repents of his sins and confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of his life can be saved and have peace with God (Rom. 5:1; 10:9,10 Acts 2:22-47). When anyone receives the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:12) they are forgiven of their sins, sin's penalty is canceled, and a proper relationship with God are restored (Col. 2:9-15). The moment anyone prays to receive Christ they are born again (Jn. 3) and receive the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). The righteousness of Christ is reckoned (Rom. 5:12-21) to the believer's account. Everything that is true of Christ becomes true of those who believe in Christ (Rom. 8:17). Every believer gets a new start in life with Christ: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

vital and essential because they have unique gifts that can edify the Church that others don't possess. In fact, it is only as each Christian uses his or her gift that the local Church will mature in Christian growth (Eph. 4:11-16). Doing a thorough study of Rom. 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4 will guide you in discovering your gift and overcoming inferiority (1 Cor. 12:15,16).

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING SATAN'S HATRED FOR MY BODY: One of Satan's goals is to get me to reject my body or to look at it as evil and useless. Why is this so important to him? Bill Gothard lists at least four reasons:

1 Satan is the enemy of God, and I am made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

2 Satan's work is restrained by the Holy Spirit, and my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16,17).

3 Satan tried to destroy Christ, and my body is now part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15).

4 Satan is at war with God, and the yielded members of my body are powerful weapons against him (Rom. 6:13).

WRONG EVALUATION OF THE SINS OF THE PAST: I am so glad that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the rebuilding business. Sin does wreck and destroy lives (Prov. 14:12); but the moment a person in true repentance and faith turns to the Savior, healing begins to take place. God gives to that person "...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...". "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations" (Is. 61:3,4). God promises to the repentant sinner: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten..." (Joel 2:25). All the kings horses and all the kings men may not be able to put Humpty Dumpty back together again, but praise our wonderful Lord, He can! Reread the poem about the old violin again with the wonderful truth in mind that your Savior is a rebuilder!

YOUR SALVATION AND INFERIORITY

Those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their life have **COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE** with God (Eph. 1:6). The more we understand our position in Christ as Sons of God (Eph. 1:3-6), joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17), the more we will be able to overcome our feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. It is for this reason that the rest of this booklet will seek to explain the great salvation we have in Christ.

THE FALL: Genesis 3 tells us how Adam and Eve sinned and fell from their high estate as the crown of God's creation. Adam and Eve were told they could partake of all the trees in the garden with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan persuaded Adam and Eve to violate this command of God and sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12). The consequences of their sin were devastating and far reaching. First, they lost their innocence before God. They experienced guilt and shame. Not only did they have the knowledge of evil, but now they had a nature within that was inclined towards evil. Communion with God was broken! They immediately experienced spiritual death (Eph. 2:1-4), with physical death certainly to follow (Rom. 6:23).

The music ceased, and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"
AS he held it up with the bow.

"One thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand, and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
Going, and gone." said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried
We do not quite understand;
What changed it's worth?" Quick came the reply,
"The TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND."

Many a man with life out of tune,
And scarred and battered by sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd
Much like that old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,
A game, and he travels on.
He's going once, he's going twice,
He's going, and almost gone.

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought
BY THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND.

By Myra Brooks Welch

MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS: Success in the sight of God is not measured by what I have done compared to what others have done; but what I have done compared to what I could have done! When we compare ourselves to others, to evaluate our relationship to God, the conclusions are always distorted. God warns: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12). You can always compare yourself to someone worse than yourself, so that you come out on top; and you can always compare yourself to someone better than yourself, so that you come out on bottom. God measures our success by our **FAITHFULNESS**: "Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found **FAITHFUL**" (1 Cor. 4:2). God does not require me to be like or do what others have done. His requirement is that I be faithful to do what He has gifted me to do.

WORLDLY EVALUATION SYSTEM: One cause of inferiority is accepting the world's values to measure your importance. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1:27,28). Unless you are willing to stand alone for Jesus Christ, patiently bearing the false accusations of the world, you'll never discover the secret of overcoming inferiority. Peter and Jn. had great boldness and were greatly used of God even though they were considered to be "unlearned and ignorant men" by those in the world (Acts 4:13). The world determines a man's usefulness by putting the tape measure around his head, God determines a man's usefulness by putting the tape measure around man's heart. God hides himself from the "wise and prudent" and reveals himself to "babes" (those who have a childlike dependency). Hollywood has glamorized the young, the handsome, and the

talented, but God has no such "respect of persons" (James 2:1). God honors those who have godly character: "...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel. 16:7). For example, the world honors the man who has made great material and financial gains, but God honors the man who seeks to maintain a "a good name" even if it means financial loss (Prov. 22:1).

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING YOUR CREATION: The crown of God's creation is man. God created man in His image and likeness. God said "Let us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make man in our image; after our likeness..." (Gen. 1:26). Man, made in the image of God, was given by God dominion over all the living creatures of the earth (Gen. 1:28). Unlike the rest of God's creation, man has a body, SOUL, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Man's possession of a soul separates him in value from the animal kingdom. Jesus amplifies man's value by making reference to the soul: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:28-31)

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONCEPTION: "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves..." (Ps. 100:3). God's sovereign work in making man is not limited to the first act of creation. Psalm 139:13-16 clearly reveals that God is actively involved in the womb of every mother. David wrote: "For thou [God] hast possessed my reins [inward parts]: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [unformed]; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them". God is the supreme author of planned parenthood. He planned us before the foundation of the world. No one is born by chance or accident. Conception is not a purely natural process. Speaking of Jeremiah the prophet, God says: "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee..." (Jeremiah 1:5). Just as each snowflake has its own unique design, every person is sovereignly prepared by God in the mother's womb. Our personality, intellect, physical features etc. were all uniquely designed by God to enable us to effectively carry out His plans for our lives. How valuable is each person to God? His thoughts towards every person are "...more in number than the sand..." (Ps. 139:17,18). How intimately involved is God in each person's life? The hairs of every person are numbered (Matt. 10:30).

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING YOUR PARENTAGE: Many people have a sense of inferiority because of their family background and upbringing. God makes a special promise to those who have had parents who failed in their responsibilities of child rearing; or even worse those who forsook their children. "When ...[your] father and mother forsake ...[you], then the Lord will take ...[you] up" (Ps. 27:10). God has a special purpose for each of our lives. If He allows me to be brought up by only one parent or by those other than my

parents, I can be confident that He has an extra special purpose for my life. Consider the many examples of Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Samuel, Moses and Timothy in Scripture. All of these were taken from their parents, but were used of God in ministry to others in special ways. God promises to be a "...father of the fatherless..." (Ps. 68:5). Read the story of Jephthah in Judges 11:1-12:7. He suffered with inferiority because he was born of an harlot. He allowed bitterness to spring up within his heart and joined himself to a company of vain friends. Later when he had the opportunity to become the leader of his hometown army, he was so desperate to win the battle and gain acceptance of others that he made a rash vow concerning his daughter. This vow damaged the future of the daughter whom he loved. Jephthah is one example of what can happen when we don't thank God for our parentage and seek to discover His blessing in whatever circumstances He has allowed in our birth and upbringing.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING DEFECTS: When God allows physical defects in a person's life either through birth or through the accidents of life, you can be sure He has some very important reasons. Moses was reminded that if God so chooses, he can prevent defects from occurring (Ex. 4:10,11). When He allows them, grace is given to that individual so that GOD'S POWER AND GLORY CAN BE MANIFESTED IN THEIR WEAKNESS (2 Cor. 12:1-10)! The disciples once asked Jesus why a man had been born blind. They thought it was a sin problem either in his life or his parent's life that caused this infirmity. Jesus responded that this blindness was not caused by a sin problem, but was allowed so that the works of God could be manifested (Jn. 9). The great hymn writer Fanny Crosby was blinded at a very young age by the mistake of a doctor's medication. She could have been bitter towards God, but instead she understood the truth that every thing the heavenly Father allows to happen to us is for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). We sing "Blessed Assurance", "Rescue the Perishing", "All the way my Savior Leads Me", "Be Thou Exalted", "Saved By Grace", "Draw Me Nearer" and many, many others because Fanny learned that her value to God was not inhibited by her defects. She learned to glory in her infirmities that the power of Christ could rest upon her (2 Cor. 12:9). The man who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace", Jn. Newton, was a wicked sea captain before his conversion. He was so mean that the men on his ship hated and despised him. One day when he was accidentally thrown overboard, the men debated about his rescue. Finally, they reluctantly rescued him by throwing a spear into his leg that had a rope attached to pull him in. From that day on Jn. Newton walked with a limp! After his conversion, he gave testimony that every time he took a step with his limp, it was his heavenly Father's constant reminder of God's amazing grace that saved a wretch like him.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Consider the following admonition: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). Notice that God instructs every Christian to have confidence in himself and that this confidence is rooted in the "measure of faith". If you study the context of this verse, you will discover that the "measure of faith" is a reference to the spiritual gifts God gives to all believers. Every Christian at the moment of conversion is given one or more spiritual gifts by the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:7-11). Each member of the body of Christ is