



Spirit of Grace

Herald

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Alternative to Self-confidence

America, and much of the world have been in a long-term love affair with the idea of self-confidence. There are a seemingly endless number of websites dedicated to this topic with articles like: “8 Ways to be More Confident,” “How to Achieve 100 Percent Self-confidence,” “25 Killer Actions to Boost Your Self-confidence,” “7 Days to Unstoppable Self-confidence,” and on and on ad nauseam. According to these gurus of success, the only thing between you and an amazing career, marriage, family, and social life is just a dab more self-confidence. And they are glad to share with you their prescription for how to obtain it.

At first glance, their assertion that self-confidence improves one’s chances at success in almost every area appears unquestionably true. Virtually all world class athletes approach their respective sport believing that they are gifted athletes and expecting to succeed. But it is not only athletes who make use of self-confidence. Super salesmen are absolutely brimming with confidence. People who rise high on the corporate ladder are invariably confident men and women. Weak-willed, fearful, nervous types who constantly second-guess themselves will probably stay in the mailroom all their lives; you will never find

them using the executive washroom.

This makes it rather strange when we consider just how thoroughly and absolutely the Scriptures condemn self-confidence, or to use the more Biblical name for it, self-trust. The apostle Paul summarizes the Christian life and attitude in his epistle to the Philippians with these words:

For we are the circumcision (the covenant people of God), who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Philippians 3:3)

In another passage of scripture, Paul describes passing through a place of great danger and conflict. For a time, it looked as though he wouldn’t survive, and he wrote these words:

We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead... (2 Corinthians 1:9)



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This is really incredible. Paul is telling us that God deliberately allowed and directed him into perilous and seemingly hopeless circumstances for one major reason – to cause him to lose every trace of self-trust and instead look directly to God as his only possible source of deliverance.

In Proverbs we read, “**He who trusts in his own heart is a fool**” (Proverbs 28:26). Jeremiah writes, “**Cursed is the**

man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD” (Jeremiah 17:5). To go through your life ignoring God, assuming you are big enough, smart enough, wise enough, talented enough, attractive enough, **to assume that you are enough is to be cursed.** And perhaps the greatest aspect of that curse is that God leaves you to yourself and your own resources. You will receive no grace, no answered prayers, no divine interventions, no mercies from heaven, **and in the end, you will find that you were not enough after all – not nearly enough. Only Jesus Christ is enough!**

God’s alternative to self-confidence is not no-confidence. God does not want the basketball player beginning the game, thinking, “I’m sure we’ll lose tonight. I’ll probably play poorly and miss every shot.” He does not encourage the business owner to think, “I know my business will be a complete failure. I’ll probably be closing my doors within a year.”

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He does not require the speaker to walk up to the podium with the thought, "I will fail miserably with this presentation. I'll be boring and dry, and everybody will no doubt fall asleep before I'm done."

The Scriptural alternative to self-confidence is **God-confidence and Christ-confidence**. The problem with self-confidence is that offends God and leads us into the delusion that should we succeed, we have done it on our own. **The person with self-confidence may well succeed, but in the end their success will be worse for them than if they had failed.** They will be reinforced to trust in themselves more and more, and eventually this will lead them into terrible places, worst of all being a permanent state of enmity and hardness toward God.

The Bible declares, "**Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God**" (2 Corinthians 3:5). In Christ we can walk into our offices every Monday, fully expecting to succeed. We can stand at the pulpit in church or in that women's conference, assured that our words will be effective. We can relax and enjoy our marriage ceremony with confidence that our marriage will be blessed of God. Our confidence is in Jesus Christ, and we are among those blessed individuals who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

THIS MONTH — MISSION KENYA

A Special appeal from Dennis:

Dear Friends,

This month Benedicta and I are scheduled to minister in Bokoli, Kenya. I am making a special appeal to you, our friends, to help us in the financial needs we have associated with this mission. As always, we are dependent upon God to move on your hearts to generously support these evangelistic and teaching missions. In addition to the teaching and preaching, we plan to supply clothes to the local orphans. Will you pray about sending us a generous contribution, either through the mail or by using PayPal or a credit card on or website? Your gifts mean so much to us!

A Critical Need:

We still need about \$5,000 to cover our expenses for this meeting. But to compound our needs, in our last mission to Nigeria, we were not able to cover our budget, and still owe around \$3,000 in travel expenses which are on a credit card account. This is a major financial burden to us. We are already committed to doing this Kenya meeting, so we will not cancel it, but if we are not able to make up this shortfall, we may have to cancel our fall mission to Africa. We know God does not want us in debt, and sadly, that is precisely where we are right now. We must have around \$5,000 to cover this mission and another \$3,000 to catch us up from our last mission. If this money does not come in, it would seem irresponsible to keep on piling up debt on credit cards to cover our Africa ministry. Therefore, we would have to do something that we absolutely hate to do – cancel one of our missions for the year.

Your contributions can help us to continue to minister to the beautiful people of Africa. Please consider sending us a generous donation that we may carry on with the work of the gospel! We appreciate you!

Your partner in the proclamation of Jesus Christ,

Dennis Pollard

Thanks for caring!

