

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Self Love

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IS loving self a sin? Should a Christian eliminate the love for self from his or her thinking? Answering these questions may be a little tricky. But relying on the principle that truth harmonizes in all circumstances, we can answer these inquiries for ourselves Scripturally.

Loving self was one of two fastening nails upon which the Law of Moses hanged. Jesus reminded his questioners, as they tested Him regarding the greatest commandment, that the great and first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind; and the second commandment is to “*love thy neighbor as thyself*” adding, “*on these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets*” (Matthew 22:37-40). Paul reminds the Christians in Rome that the section of the Law dealing with ones relationship with man “*is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*” (Romans 13: 10). James encourages Christians reminding them that when they “*fulfill the royal law...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well*” (James 2:8). If Christians are to do well today in carry-

ing out the Lord’s command to love our neighbor as ourselves, must we not maintain a love for self ?

Self love is essential for husbands in their relationship with their own wives. Paul connects the Lord’s attitude towards his body, the church, with the husband’s attitude toward his wife. He exhorts, “*Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself; for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church*” (Ephesians 5:28-29).

If one does not have a healthy love for self, how will a Christian relate compassionately with one’s fellow man? How will a husband relate positively in his care and protection for his own wife if he does not have a healthy love for self in caring for his own body? Surely God demands the Christian to maintain a healthy love for self in his walk with Christ.

While we must relate to a love for self, we must make sure that such love does not become the

central reference point in our lives. Love for God comes first. Remember the *first* commandment is to love God with all our being, not love for self. (Matthew 22:37-38). The *second* law is love our neighbor as ourselves implying how we should prioritize our love.

Paul reminds us that grievous times are characterized by people being “*lovers of self*” (2 Timothy 3:2). By examining the context of Paul’s warning, we see that this love for self is motivated by self absorption in materialism, disconnected from any love for God. People of self love were also “*lovers of money...no lovers of good...and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*” (2 Timothy 3:2-4).

Is a love of self a sin? It is a sin only when the love for self takes precedent over our love for God. Should a Christian eliminate the love for self from their life? No, because we will take away a healthy way of knowing how we should treat our fellow man in specific circumstances. Love self, but always love God first.