



Unity Church of Christianity
The Esteem Stream Part Two
July 17, 2011

Howard Caesar

There was a young man who was about 18 years old and living at home. One day he told his parents, “I’m leaving. I want adventure. I want travel. I want excitement,” and so he left the house. His parents were trailing after him, and he said, “You’re not going to try and stop me are you?” They said, “No, we’re coming with you!” It sounded pretty appealing.

Deep inside each of us, at our core, is the seed of our true self. Psychologists tell us that we have many selves, with a small “s.” We have a critical self, judgmental self, fearful self, this self, that self. Deep inside our core is this true self, with a capital “S,” that’s the real deal. That’s the real you, and that is the God self of you. Your core is the part of you that is made of the nature of God. The true self is the seed that is the nature of God at the core of your being. It’s referred to as the image and likeness of which we were made. It’s the sacred Holy you that God created. It’s basically really who you are, but you and I forgot in varying degrees about our true selves. To some extent, we fell asleep to that true self and covered it with various conditionings, false ideas, false beliefs and limiting things because we had free will. We were making decisions all the way along and some of them were not accurate.

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We're told that man's major problem is separation. Masters and mystics and teachers throughout time have essentially told us this. They're talking about the separation in consciousness from our true self, which means we have varying degrees of not being awake, aware and conscious of our true identity, what God created us to be. Our true identity is what we are held to be in the mind of God, the true image and likeness that exists. Our true identity is divine. Our true identity is beauty and love and light and goodness; that is truly you. It has to be. We were created by the Divine, so you and I have that Divine dimension to us.

As Paul said, we are all joint heirs with Christ and that Christ in you is your hope of glory. There is a Christ-likeness that is our true spiritual heritage. It is something that we are not to forget. It's important. We have this still small voice that is spoken of biblically. This still small voice is the voice of God within us that knows the truth. When we hear the truth, we resonate with it. There is something inside of us that knows it rings with truth. There is a still small voice of God within us that knows the truth if we will listen.

There is a wonderful passage by the poet James Rhodes. I love what he says. He states, "Again that voice, that on my listening ears falls, like star music filtering through the spheres, know this, oh man, soul root of sin in thee is not to know thine own divinity." I love that, especially those last two lines. In other words, through the years, man has had emphasized to him that he is a sinner. The idea of getting it all wrong has been imbedded in us and that basically we have something wrong with us. We are sinners. We are bad. It doesn't say that we're—not to say that we don't make mistakes or errors; we'll get to that. The poet states here that the soul root of all sin is not knowing your divinity. We all make mistakes. You could label yourself something and lock on to that as your identity, but the soul root of all sin is to forget who you really are, where you're headed toward and what you're really here to be about. It all has to do with where our focus lies. It's very, very important in a healthy focus or an unhealthy focus. It's so important that all of us remember who we really are, and that we have an uplifting message of the truth, because in so many ways, we're bombarded in the world.

Last week I spoke about God's Esteem Stream, and I'm going to continue on that. Today is part two of a two-part series. We touched upon the importance of healthy self-esteem in God's Esteem Stream. A healthy self-esteem basically comes down to loving yourself, and I don't think we can say enough about loving ourselves. It takes awhile to get through all the resisting layers we have built up. Loving ourselves is so important to our quality of life. It is so vital and important to the quality of our relationships. In life, all of our various behaviors have to do with self-esteem in terms of how we're interacting with each other in this world. Some of the most troubled people in this world are those who have simply not learned to love themselves. Those who are most miserable, most unhappy, the most wounded of all people are those who have not

learned to love and accept themselves. Those who seem to have it all together, even they have pockets of insecurities. They have pockets of low self-esteem still being healed.

We all have insecurities. It's a healthy thing to know that about oneself. There is a willingness to be aware and notice what is yet within us that still needs healing, what we still bump against. Much of our transformation in consciousness is to grow beyond these insecurities, which are the conditions that you and I have put on loving ourselves. We have all kinds of conditions that stops love at the door and it can't get in.

We know that all happiness and fulfillment really comes down to love. Jesus certainly stressed the importance of love, and last week we highlighted the important commandments that he spoke of. The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and the second is like unto it, thou shall love your neighbor as yourself. What often is forgotten are those last two words "as yourself." It means you can only love your neighbor, your spouse, your child—you basically can't love anyone until you actually love yourself. It has to be filled up for something to pour out through you. It is very, very important.

We say how important love is spiritually, and all the masters, mystics and teachers have talked about that. This is crucial to our quality of life. It's crucial to making a difference in the world and being a vessel through which God is moving. We're not talking about ego edging God out, the part that always looks outside. It's a kind of loving ourselves that has superiority or inferiority built into it that's of the ego. We're not talking about that. We're talking about loving yourself at the core, coming back to the place where you know you are a child of God. The essence of you is beautiful and wonderful and good. We may have gotten some things messed up, and we may be making some mistakes about us. We may have some wounds to heal, but essentially at the core is this wonderful being. It's more about establishing an unconditional love and acceptance of yourself, right here, right now, not putting it off to some other time. You love and accept yourself no matter what. I don't care what the conditions are, and I don't care what mistakes we have made. It's being careful not to measure ourselves based on external and outward indicators as to whether we're getting it right or not. Everyone can do that. We want our love of self to take on a God quality, which means that it never goes away. In Jeremiah where God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love," that's the kind of love we need to have for ourselves.

Eckhart Tolle is a wonderful, enlightened being. He says love is a state of being. It's a state of being. He says your love is not outside. It's deep within you where love is found. We can look forever outside of ourselves, but essentially it has to be found within us. Jesus was the teacher and the model of love. Do you think he had low self-esteem? Do you think Jesus had low self-esteem and insecurity issues? I guess not. Jesus loved himself because he knew himself to be part

of God, and he saw everyone else as part of God. People use that term “Namaste”: the divinity in me greets the divinity you; the Christ in me beholds the Christ in you. Jesus looked out at life and at people from the core of His divinity. His identity was truly locked on to the Divine. He knew there was no distance between him and the Divine. Therefore, that’s who he was. He stood in that so firmly and that’s all he saw in anyone else. No matter what was going on, no matter what the errors or the mistakes, he always saw to the core. This is the truth of you. This is your true self and that’s something we are to get to as well. Jesus loved himself because he was so connected to God and love. They’re synonymous. He really understood and knew that loving himself had nothing to do with size, weight, wardrobe or the mule He was riding. None of these things had anything to do with loving Himself.

Wherever we have excess and extremes in our life, there is likely to be a low self-esteem issue. Let’s say if we are excessive as an overachiever or extremely competitive and have to win all the time or if we’re a perfectionist, it doesn’t mean you’re a bad person. It just means that you’re motivated by feelings of inferiority to some extent. Many people have inferiority feelings that cause them to seek validation and gain their sense of worth and value from things or money or power or praise, whatever is external to themselves. That’s why it’s so important for us to be in touch with our feelings. Our feelings are our gurus. We should always tell the truth to ourselves about what we’re feeling instead of projecting it on the world or the person standing next to us as having caused us to feel what we’re feeling.

A very competitive person can sometimes have a self-esteem issue, having to win in order to feel good. Even a person who let’s say—and being a fan, I’m a sports fan. I notice this about myself on occasion where I have to be careful. I used to have a friend who was so invested in a sports team that when his team lost he was furious. He was throwing things around. He was irritable, so angry and so miserable when the team lost that he thought “I’m a loser.” Get what I’m saying? In other words, he projected out and was so attached to the team that it provoked his issue of feeling like a loser within himself. That’s why you have people fighting outside of the stadiums or inside. It’s really a fighting self-esteem issue, at least that’s part of it. It’s silly, but it’s true. It’s very, very human.

My sister was dating a guy, actually hadn’t dated him but once or twice, and he came over to the house. I was in the eighth grade at the time, and the guy was in high school. He came over, and I was out in the driveway shooting baskets. He came along and wanted to buddy up to me, his girlfriend’s kid brother. He started shooting baskets with me, and then we decided to play a game of one-on-one. We would play up to 10, the first one to get 10 baskets in. We’re playing, and it got pretty intense because I’m competitive. It came down to a really, really tight 9-9, and finally, I did beat him. I beat him by one. I was pretty elated, and it satisfied my inferiorities. We went inside. I wanted to tell my sister and my mom that we had a good round out there, but I beat him.

Well, that wasn't how he remembered it. He told a story that he beat me, and I was kind of shocked. I remember that about this guy. It said something about his character. It didn't mean that he was a bad person; it just meant that he had some low self-esteem. Of course, that's not what I thought then as an eighth grader. I thought, "This guy's a bum. He's a liar." There are some do's and don'ts to a healthy self-esteem and to stepping into God's esteem stream. One of the don'ts is to basically—I think this should be the Eleventh Commandment, though shall not compare. Though shall not compare and we do consciously or unconsciously. It's something that leads to lowering self-esteem because it tends to always make you feel better than or less than. It's a comparing that's done by the ego. The ego is always weighing in on that kind of comparing.

The story of the prodigal son has so many teachings there. One of them has to do with what we're talking about here and is a great example. The young prodigal son had gone away and did his thing. Then he finally rose up and came home. When he came home, his father saw him and came running out to meet him. He embraced him and hugged him and kissed him. He was just so delighted. He called for the finest robe and a ring for his hand and special shoes. He had the servants kill the fatted calf so there could be a party and make merry.

All of that we know, but often times people don't realize there is more to the story that has to do with the other son, the eldest son. He's out in the fields, and he hears the music and dancing. You can read this in the passage. He finds out that there's been a fatted calf killed. There's dancing and merriment, and it states he was angry. He wouldn't even attend. His father came out to invite him in asking, "What's the matter? Come on in," and he went into his tirade, "All these years, I served you. I've been here, working the fields. I didn't go off. I kept my nose clean. I did it right. You've never given me a party where I could have merriment with my friends. What is the deal?" He got into comparing his experience to his brother's. Low self-esteem will always invalidate one's own present reality. It will invalidate you. Basically, it makes everyone else wrong, and everything else in your life wrong in the comparison kind of way. No matter what it is, it's never enough when we get into comparing. What's come to us, it's never enough. It's not good enough.

The elder son believed love is something that you earn, that it comes with sacrifice. If you're into sacrificing to get love, you have a hidden motivation of an expectation that others don't necessarily know or understand. When that expectation continues to come up empty, there are problems down the road because you're sacrificing. Love should not be about sacrifice. Love should be about loving because that's who you are. Love is for being. Believing that worth is based on what you do is not healthy. It should be based on just being loved. If the elder son had high self-esteem, he would've wrapped his arms around his brother and been just as happy to see him as his father had been.

Don't get into comparing, and be aware when you do. One of the do's is, again, to tell yourself the truth about what it is that you are feeling. If the elder son had really been in touch and aware and awake of himself; he would've stopped and said what I'm feeling is jealousy. I must have a fear that my father loves my brother more than me. I'm going to have to work on that issue because it's mine.

Remember, one of the tendencies of low self-esteem is to need validation from outside yourself to feel good, when validation really needs to come from within. If you have to have it from outside yourself, you will never get enough. It will never be enough to satisfy you because you think it comes from outside. As we heal and learn to love ourselves, then we find it so much easier to share our love and kindness and to be more tolerant of others because we're more tolerant of ourselves. We need to love ourselves even in the midst of the mistakes and the errors and the bad choices we may make. We tolerate and love ourselves and go on, and we'll be better able to do that with those around us as well. We tend to treat everyone around us the same way that we treat ourselves, whether we're aware of that or not. As we grow spiritually, we begin to grasp the importance of the emphasis being on the inner; that inwardly we're all the same. We're all children of God, and inwardly we're all loved by God.

There is never a sense of equality when you are looking only with your eyes outward. Peoples' lives are all different. They have different bodies and different appearances. They have different interests. They have different lessons that they're going through. They have different possessions and achievements and education and cultures. It's all different. You're never going to have equality or a sense of feeling equal to others if you're always looking and weighing and measuring in an outer way.

There was a blind person who was once quoted. He went blind at some point in his life. He said, "I thought when I lost my sight that I would be doomed to unhappiness. Now I've discovered that I'm happier in some ways without my sight. Most of my unhappy thoughts came in through my eyes. I saw new things and became unhappy with what I had. I saw handsome faces of other people and was dissatisfied with my own looks."

You see stepping into God's esteem stream means learning to see with a new focus. It basically means having a focus where value and worth are not determined by anything external but internally. We are all the creators of that assessment and we are all created by God. We all have a unique place on our path of learning. Conditions, circumstances and behavior may or may not be acceptable, but value and worth remain for you. It doesn't go away, whatever your conditions, whatever your circumstances, whatever the behavior. We feel of equal value to anyone then, and we stop criticizing ourselves for anything, for our mistakes, for our bad choices, for our

behaviors. We are not our mistakes, and we are not our behavior. We can learn from our mistakes. We can dislike our behavior without disliking ourselves and rejecting ourselves. When we tell ourselves the truth and discover our hidden motivations, we'll begin to make more awake and aware choices in our lives.

Realize that the future is now. It's not some time down the road, and that means—oh, "I'll get around to loving myself when I achieve this or when I find that." Our mind plays tricks on that. Ask yourself why it is that you can't love yourself right now. What is it that jumps up? What is it that's been haunting you forever? Was it something in your past? Is it something in the present? Is it something that you don't like about yourself? Is it something that you want different, and you'll never love yourself until you get there? It's a harsh, harsh sense of condemning yourself. It's been helpful for me to actually reflect on this whole idea. I am finding pockets of low self-esteem and reasons that I don't fully love myself. I have things to work through. We all do, and I think it's important to be honest and notice that. For me, it has come down to making a decision again and again and again to love myself. I may notice something I messed up or could've done better, but essentially you decide to say I love myself and move on. I'm going to love myself. I'm going to learn and move on. No matter what, I'm going to love myself, and that's what is important. God wants me to love myself. It's the only way that I will become a more loving person. It is the only way that I can add love to this world. I need to remember that God loves me with no strings attached, unconditional, and that's the kind of love I need to give myself, and then I'll have it for others too.

This week an email was sent to me by a friend in the congregation called "Tequila and Salt." I'll tell you what that means at the end. It has 11 statements, and it suggests taping them up on your mirror to read everyday. It's very fulfilling with some good wisdom in this. I'll read these. It says all 11 statements are 100% true. Number one: There are at least 2 people in this world that you would die for. What that says is that there are at least two people that would die for me. Two people I would die for and two people who would die for me. Number two: At least 15 people in this world love you in some way, at least 15. Number three: The only reason anyone would ever hate you is because they want to be just like you. Number four: A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you. Number five: Every night someone thinks about you before they go to sleep. Number six: You mean the world to someone. Number seven: You are special and unique. Number eight: Someone that you don't even know exists loves you. Number nine: When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good comes from it. Number ten: When you think the world has turned its back on you, take another look. Number eleven: Always remember the compliments you received, forget about the rude remarks. There is a foot note at the end that states, "Always remember when life hands you lemons, ask for tequila and salt and call me over."

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Remember, “Thou shall not compare.” Tell yourself the truth about what you’re really feeling. Validation is an inside job. Stop criticizing yourselves. Now is the time to love yourself, do not put it off. Step into God’s esteem stream now and go be a light in the world.