

## Week 3: Lies We Believe About Ourselves

1. Video of a mother who learned to love.
  - a. Last week we covered “Lies we believe about God.”
  - b. If we believe things about God that aren’t true, we will believe things about everything else that aren’t true. Your building is only as good as the foundation you build it upon.
  - c. This week we will look at some of the lies that we believe about ourselves.
  
2. Our view of ourselves is often determined by the input and opinions of others.
  - a. Someone may have told you that you were unattractive, nerdy, unable to sing, overweight, or something else.
  - b. You may not have realized that you believed them, but you’re the way you live will betray you.
  - c. **A great deal of the way we behave is based upon what we believe about ourselves.**
  - d. So often we fail to connect the dots between the way we behave with what we believe about ourselves. We seem to think “oh, that’s just the way I am.”
    - i. When we believe a lie about ourselves, will have a negative impact upon our life.
  
3. **Some of the lies we believe:**
  - a. The first lie is based upon making the wrong conclusion. **I’m worthless.**
    - i. Somewhere we developed a self-view that said we were worth---less than someone else.
      1. Maybe it was because we didn’t get as good of grades as someone else
      2. Maybe it was because we weren’t as athletic. The kids who played sports seemed more valuable...they got the attention we wanted...*so we think that they are worth more based upon what they do.* .
      3. As a result we feel that because we aren’t as smart, pretty, tall, trim, athletic...that we are worth---less.
        - a. Notice I did not say worth-nothing. I said worth-less.
      4. **Worth-less-ness** comes from the act of comparing ourselves to others and measuring ourselves by someone else’s standards.
        - a. It will even lead us to conclude that we aren’t “worthy” of a good spouse, a wonderful life or a good job.
        - b. Once we reach this conclusion, we will even self-sabotage our relationships, our jobs, and even our own dreams.
    - ii. We often base our conclusion that “we’re worthless” on our feelings instead of the truth.
      1. You go to a party and are surrounded by a bunch of seemingly happy strangers, which only brings back memories of the put-downs you endured at the hands of the “happy people” you went to school with.
        - a. So you relive your feelings and take a nose dive.
      2. Or you get a phone call from your father or mother or sister or brother and all of the feelings of worthless-ness come flooding back.
        - a. It may only take a two word criticism to throw you back into your emotional prison.
      3. You call your best friend, or your counselor for reassurance that you are valuable and special. But it never lasts. The feelings of worthlessness keep sneaking back in.
      4. The truth is that no amount of positive input will ever outweigh the negative lies that we believe about ourselves.
        - a. One hundred compliments on how good you look today will be negated by one suspicious or innocent remark. How do you like my dress? “Oh it looks okay.” Bam!

- iii. Do you ever say, “I am so dumb,” or “I can’t believe I did that! Stupid me!”
    - 1. The lie we are believing is that somehow we should be capable of doing better and couldn’t.
      - a. Somewhere there is a standard that is out of our reach and we keep on failing to attain it.
      - b. To which we ought to be proclaiming the truth to ourselves, “**I’m so human!**”
      - c. Do we really EXPECT perfection from ourselves? (I struggle with this one).
    - 2. **The lies that drive these feelings of worth-less-ness come from trying to gain your value from what others think, believe or how they value you.**
  - iv. But if we look to Jesus, we find that **Jesus’ self worth was never determined by others.**
    - 1. His worth was determined by the truth, by His Father (God’s) approval alone.
    - 2. 1 Peter 2:4 *Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable.* (GN)
      - a. People saw Jesus as worthless, but did Jesus believe them?
    - 3. John 2:24-25 *But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew what people were really like. No one needed to tell him about human nature.*
      - a. He knew better than to seek His value from other people!
    - 4. Matthew 17:5 (AMP) *While he was still speaking, behold, a shining cloud [composed of light] overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is My Son, My Beloved, with Whom I am [and have always been] delighted. Listen to Him!* Jesus was entirely secure in His Father’s love and approval.
  - v. A story was told of a man who loved old books. He met an acquaintance who had just thrown away a Bible that had been stored in the attic of his ancestral home for generations. “I couldn’t read it,” the friend explained, “Somebody named Guten-something had printed it.” “Not Gutenberg!” the book lover exclaimed in horror. “That Bible was one of the first books ever printed. Why, a copy just sold for over two million dollars!” His friend was unimpressed. “Mine wouldn’t have brought a dollar. Some fellow named Martin Luther had scribbled all over it in German.”
  - vi. Imagine someone throwing a Van Gogh painting into the trash. Would the act of one person’s disregard or disbelief in its worth make that painting any less valuable? **No!** Its value is **INTRINSIC**. A collector would dig it out of the trash and treasure it forever!
    - 1. **When God sent His only Son Jesus to bear your sin and mine, He put a price tag on us!**
    - 2. He declared the value of our soul to be greater than the value of the entire world.
  - vii. Whose opinion are you going to believe?
    - 1. Believing a lie will put you in bondage, believing the truth will set you free.
    - 2. And the truth is, **God thinks more highly of us than we think of ourselves.**
- b. The next lie is similar, but is a lie that builds upon the wrong premise. It says, **I am not such a bad person.**
- i. I hear this generally from people who are non-Christians, but occasionally from people claiming to be Christians but who have a flawed view of what it takes to get to heaven.
  - ii. It wasn’t too long ago that some liberal theologians threw out the doctrine of the total depravity of man.
  - iii. They did this in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and people have continued to buy this lie that man was not totally ruined by sin in spite of witnessing the two greatest wars in human history, 7 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides claiming 50 million people, a holocaust that killed 12 million, along the advent of terrorism where women and children are potential targets.

1. The doctrine of the depravity of man states that as a result of the “fall of man” in the Garden of Eden, every person born in the world is enslaved to the service of their lower nature (or sin) and, apart from the grace of God, is unable to choose to follow God or to obey His commands.
  - a. This doctrine says that people are *by their inherited nature* are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God.
2. **Total depravity does not mean, however, that people are as bad as possible.**
  - a. Rather, it means that the good which a person might actually do is faulty in its motive and that no attempt to fine tune our natural capacity will correct this condition. In other words, we cannot ‘FIX’ our propensity to sin and serve self.
  - b. **Depravity is a description of our nature and its effects upon our lives.**
  - c. The difference between total depravity and "utter" depravity.
    - i. To be utterly depraved is to be as wicked as one could possibly be.
    - ii. Hitler was extremely depraved, but he could have been worse than he was.
    - iii. You could sin more often and more severely than you actually do.
      1. You am not utterly depraved, but you are totally depraved.
    - iv. Total depravity means that I and everyone else are corrupt in the totality of our being.
    - v. There is no part of our life that is left untouched by sin.
    - vi. Our minds, our wills, and our bodies are contaminated by evil.
    - vii. We speak sinful words, do sinful deeds, have impure thoughts. Our very bodies suffer from the ravages of sin.
    - viii. Our will is corrupt. **We CANNOT not choose sin.** It is our nature. Let me illustrate:
      1. **A lion in Africa is free to eat grass when it is hungry. But it never does so, because lions by nature are carnivorous. Their minds crave meat. A water buffalo is also free to eat whatever it desires. But it only chooses grass because it is in the buffalo’s nature to do so.**
      2. Men are free to choose whatever they want; but, because of the fall, man’s heart or soul is thoroughly corrupt.
      3. A corrupt heart will not and cannot choose spiritually good things.
      4. Our choices follow our nature.
      5. The will of man always acts in accordance with his lower nature.
    - ix. This is why Jesus tells Nicodemus (John 3:3): "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"
    - x. Our lower nature cannot be repaired. We must be born again. Die to the old life and be born to a new, spiritual life
3. Although people are capable of externally good acts (acts that are good for society), they cannot do anything really good, that is pleasing to God (Rom. 8:8).
  - a. God looks on the heart, He knows the motives of man.
  - b. *And from God’s standpoint, fallen man has no goodness, in thought, word, or deed. He is therefore incapable of contributing anything to his salvation.* - John Frame

- c. The apparent good which people do is the result of the fact that, in their lives, one kind of lust represses and restrains another kind.
    - i. A man whose whole life is dominated by the lust for money is so completely absorbed in acquiring to himself an abundance of material things that this desire is dominant, all-encompassing in his life.
    - ii. It is a completely driving force which banishes all other lusts.
      - 1. In the pursuit of gain, he foregoes all other pleasures.
      - 2. He does not want to squander his money in gluttony, drunkenness and immoral living.
      - 3. He eats sparingly and drinks in moderation.
      - 4. He does not want to waste his wealth. He uses all of his resources and strength to pursue his goal.
      - 5. To an outsider, he lives a moral, upright life, but inside his heart he is simply living for something that excludes all that does not aid him in the pursuit of his goal.
      - 6. This is the explanation for the apparent good which people do.
      - 7. *One lust only restrains another.*
        - a. Some of us want respect, our lust for it constrains our behavior.
        - b. Some of us want success, our lust for it constrains all other behaviors.
  - d. We are like this from childhood.
    - i. Property Laws of a Toddler: You might say this is evidence of Original Sin.
      - 1. If I like it, it's mine.
      - 2. If it's in my hand, it's mine.
      - 3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
      - 4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
      - 5. If it's mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.
      - 6. If I'm doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.
      - 7. If it looks just like mine, it's mine.
      - 8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
      - 9. If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
      - 10. If it's broken, it's yours.
4. Paul says that we were "dead in our trespasses."
- a. He did not say that we were dying.
  - b. He said dead.
  - c. Completely, utterly, without any life, we were dead.
  - d. Martyn Lloyd-Jones "*Life for the non-Christian is a living death.*"
  - e. What is spiritual death? It is the opposite of spiritual life.
    - i. Spiritual death is separation from God.
    - ii. Death is to *not know God*. It is to have no fellowship with him.
    - iii. Life is defined by Jesus: "*Eternal LIFE IS that that they might know You, the only one true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent,*" (John 17:3)
    - iv. John 5:24 "*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.* In other

words, our default status was dead. We start off spiritually dead. We are separated from God.

- f. Despite this verdict on human shortcomings, the idea persists in our culture that sin is something peripheral to our nature.
  - i. They will acknowledge that we are flawed by sin like acne on a teenager's face.
  - ii. But they believe that our evil deeds reside at the edge of our character and never penetrate to the core.
  - iii. And so they assume people are inherently good..
  - iv. But they forget the self-centeredness of our lower nature.

**5. Why do we need to understand the danger of this lie in us?:**

- a. We will never be able to appreciate what Christ has done for us until we understand our true nature, need, and standing before Him.
- b. We will never realize our need for redemption until we see our total lost-ness.
- c. We will never see the depths of God's love for us until we realize how wicked we were.
- d. We will never understand the way this world works until we realize that all men are evil.
- e. We will never have a heart for evangelism until we come to the understanding of this truth. .
- f. When we fully realize these things it will drive us to worship when we see what Christ did for us as unworthy as we were.
  - i. Possibly use:
  - ii. Eph 4:17-19 *So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.*
  - iii. Eph 2:1:3 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

**6. When someone says, "I'm not such a bad person" they mean it only in comparative terms.**

- a. In 2002, a news story arose about Madelyne Toogood on television. She's the mother who was caught beating her four-year-old child in an Indiana department store parking lot. Because of the store's surveillance camera what she thought was a private venting of frustration has become a very public crime.
- b. Shamed and embarrassed, Mrs. Toogood turned herself in a few days later. When she stood before the media microphones, this young mother wept and asked forgiveness. Toogood said she was shocked by her actions, and she begged authorities not to punish her child (by placing her in child-protective services) for something that was clearly the mother's fault. As part of her explanation, the harried mother looked into the television cameras and said, "I am not a monster!"
- c. Her last comment got me thinking about the reality of the sin nature within us all. It reminded me of God's commentary on the human condition as recorded by Jeremiah: "*The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?*" (Jeremiah 17:9, NLT)
- d. In other words, real monsters aren't the only ones who behave like monsters at times.
  - i. I'm not such a bad person compared to...Hitler? My neighbor? The guy who was arrested for robbing a bank? What standard of comparison do we use to determine what a BAD person really is?

- e. I had a conversation last week with a man who said this and I asked him if he had ever broken one of the 10 commandments. He acknowledged that he had.
- f. God's standard is that any sin, is still an affront to His perfect standard of holiness. That is why the bible says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
- g. Luke 18:9-14 *To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evildoers, adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.*

c. **LIE #3: I am just sinner.**(saved by grace)

i. Song by Gaithers:

*If you could see what I once was  
If you could go with me  
Back to where I started from  
Then I know you would see  
A miracle of love that took me in its sweet embrace  
And made me what I am today  
Just an old sinner saved by grace.*

*I'm just a sinner saved by grace  
When I stood condemned to death  
He took my place  
Now I live and breathe in freedom with each breath of life I take  
Loved and forgiven  
Back with the living  
I'm just a sinner saved by grace*

*How could I boast of anything I've ever seen or done?  
How could I dare to claim as mine the vict'ries God has won?  
Where would I be had God not brought me gently to this place?  
I'm here to say I'm nothing but a sinner saved by grace*

*I'm just a sinner saved by grace  
When I stood condemned to death  
He took my place  
Now I live and breathe in freedom with each breath of life I take  
Loved and forgiven  
Back with the living  
I'm just a sinner saved by grace*

1. Most of us would agree with those words, but they are theologically flawed.
2. Yes, we were *once* sinners. Jesus did take my place. I am forgiven. It is by His grace!
3. **But I not JUST a sinner saved by grace.** I
  - a. If it had said, "I once was a sinner but now I am saved by grace" it would have been theologically **correct**.

ii. Noted author Neil Anderson states that he had done some counting in his Bible.

1. He found 330 places where unsaved people are called sinners.
2. He found 240 places where saved people are called saints.

3. **But he found exactly zero places where saved people are called sinners.**
  4. Now, that stands in wild contrast to 16+centuries in which Christians have been taught that they're still sinners.
- iii. It's true, and we need to confess, repent, and make amends whenever we do sin.
    1. But "sinner" is not our main **identity** anymore, and we need to reverse our self-image and free ourselves from this crippling distortion.
    2. Look at the letters Paul wrote:
      - a. Did he ever address a letter to the "sinners" in Rome or Ephesus or Philippi?
      - b. If the Bible calls you a saint, why would you demean yourself by denying it?
      - c. The Lord Jesus paid a steep price to make you a saint, so smile and accept it and get on with a higher life.
  - iv. This is not just semantics. It's a practical matter.
    1. Ask yourself this: Just how many good things should we ever expect from dirty, low-down, no-good sinners?
    2. See the problem? The SINNER label becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
    3. If you've made a genuine, 100% commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, you're just as much a saint as Peter or Paul. **Your identity changed.** You may be a saint that occasionally sins, but you are not a sinner any longer. That died with Jesus on the cross when you placed your faith in Him.
    4. 2 Cor 5:17 *What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! (NLT)*
  - v. What is the truth? How does God see you NOW?
    1. **God sees you through the blood of Jesus.**
    2. You have become the righteousness of God in Christ.
  - vi. A few verses down in the same passage it says, (2 Cor 5:21) *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
4. Closing
    - a. Choose to believe the truth about yourself. – Believe the truth that GOD says about You. Believe and think upon, dwell upon the truth...stop thinking about the lies.
    - b. Phillipians 4:8-9 *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things.*
    - c. Will you look at your heart today?
      - i. Have you bought a lie about yourself?