

# SELF-WORTH

DISCOVER  
Your God-Given Worth

June Hunt



HOPE  
for the Heart

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God-Given Worth

JUNE HUNT



AspirePress

Torrance, California

**[www.rose-publishing.com](http://www.rose-publishing.com)** © 2013 Rose Publishing, Inc. Aspire Press

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Title: Self-Worth: Discover Your God-Given Worth Product Code: 218X ISBN-13: 9781596366688



Self-Worth: Discover Your God-Given Worth

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Aspire Press, a division of Rose Publishing, Inc.

4733 Torrance Blvd., #259

Torrance, California 90503 USA

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Printed in the United States of America  
010213DP

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Dear friend,

Do you know what it's like to struggle with feelings of *low self-worth*? If so, I understand. In your heart of hearts, you believe you have little value—especially when compared to others. Regardless of how good you may look, you feel insignificant. For years, that was exactly how I felt.

As I look back on my childhood, I can see how my father shaped my reality—my view that I had little value. I *never* remember sitting on my father's lap, *never* heard, "*I love you,*" *never* heard, "*You did well.*" In fact, he never talked *with* me. He simply wasn't interested.

At dinnertime, Dad enforced the old adage: "Children are to be seen—not heard." He announced that we couldn't speak unless we had something of interest to say to everyone at the table. Of course, he wasn't interested in anything we had to say, so we rarely spoke.

His continual verbal and emotional abuse toward my mother wounded my spirit. The "put-downs" and painful accusations pierced my heart because my mother was the dearest person in my life.

Then one day, after coming home from high school, I realized, *I'm not really showing interest in him. I'm just focusing on his faults and on my pain. So instead of being bitter, I'm going to focus attention on him.* (Although he had never asked about *my* day, I decided I would ask about *his* day.)

Dad always drove home at 5:45 p.m. and expected to have dinner at 6:00 sharp. So when I heard him walk into the side entrance of the house, I was ready—I had primed my pump for my positive greeting.

Inside the narrow hallway, I confidently approached him with a smile and said, “*Hi Dad, how was your day?*”

He exploded and yelled, “*Don’t ever ask me that question! That’s a stupid question! Never ask me that again!*”

Blown away, I felt humiliated and hurt. He had just used a stun gun on my heart. Even today, I can still feel the heat of his volcanic reaction on my cheeks.

Please understand—I am well aware that this encounter is so minor, especially in light of the major abuse that many experience. Yet encounters like this can be almost as *emotionally* paralyzing as physical and sexual abuse. I still recall his harshness—his yelling, his scowling—as though it were yesterday. How vividly I remember its demoralizing impact on my sense of significance! And never again did I ask him about his day.

It’s painful to feel like a nonperson—to feel invisible, to feel insignificant.

But realize, God knows when you have a skewed view of yourself—and He cares. The Bible says, “*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit*” (Psalm 34:18).

It's a great help just to know that the Lord holds you close when your heart has been hurt. But it's also vital that you know *what God says about you is true.*

According to the Word of God:

- ▶ God chose to create you, and as the old saying goes, “*God don’t make no junk!*”

*“God created man in his own image.”*

(Genesis 1:27)

- ▶ God has a plan for your life, and *He took His time to plan it.*

*“I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

(Jeremiah 29:11)

- ▶ God loves you, and He will never stop loving you.

*“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”*

(Jeremiah 31:3)

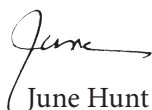
Knowing just these three truths has helped me immeasurably. Even if we periodically have difficulty *feeling* God’s love—because our emotions can get stuck—we *can know He loves us*. Even if we sometimes struggle with *feeling* insignificant, *we can know we have worth*. You are so significant that Jesus chose to die for you. Think about it: *You don’t die for something that has no worth!*



A major key to overcoming my struggle with self-worth has been *changing my focus* from the rejection of my earthly father to the love of my heavenly Father, *changing my focus* from my painful family life to the reality that I'm in the family of God, *changing my focus* from demoralizing personal failures to the fact that Jesus is my personal Redeemer.

If you can't see your *God-given value*, if you wonder about your *God-given worth*, you've come to the right place. Within these pages you'll learn what is true about you. As you read, I pray that His love will transform every false view you have until you are able to see yourself as God sees you: His precious child of infinite worth.

Yours in the Lord's hope,



June Hunt

# SELF-WORTH

## Discover Your God-Given Worth

What happens when you long to receive a gift, but only your sister is given a gift? What happens when you long to be held on your mother's lap, but only your sister is allowed on her lap? What happens when you long for your mother's love, but only your sister is given her love?

Ask Dorie Van Stone.<sup>1</sup> Dorie would tell you that repeated rejection is the breeding ground for low self-worth. Her own mother never even wanted her. Her own mother always called her “ugly.”

Dorie never received the love and affection her heart so deeply craved. However, what a comfort for Dorie (and for all the Dories in the world, both male and female) to come to know this truth:

**“The LORD does not look at  
the things man looks at.  
Man looks at the outward appearance,  
but the LORD looks at the heart.”  
(1 Samuel 16:7)**



## DEFINITIONS

Why *should* Dorie feel any sense of worth? Even before she and her sister were discarded at an orphanage, life with their mother was filled with rejection. Her mother would leave Dorie in charge of her little sister for hours—a six-year-old responsible for the total care of a five-year-old! Each time, she longed desperately for her mother to return, saying to herself, “I hope she’ll be glad to see me.” But each time her mother returned, she brushed right past Dorie to gather Marie into her arms and give her a great big hug, sometimes bringing a gift, always showering attention—attention never shown to Dorie. No wonder Dorie was left reeling with low self-worth.<sup>2</sup> As the psalmist said ...

**“Scorn has broken my heart  
and has left me helpless;  
I looked for sympathy, but there was none,  
for comforters, but I found none.”  
(Psalm 69:20)**

## WHAT IS Self-Worth?

As a child, Dorie didn't have any concept of "self-worth." How could she? As a continually rejected child, how could she feel any sense of significance, of value, of worth? Even more basic than that, how do you determine the worth of something or someone? How do you know your own worth? Do you look to yourself or others in order to grasp your value? If you look anywhere other than to God—the God who created you with a purpose and a plan—your view of your own value is in grave danger of being distorted. Before you were ever born, God established your real worth by knowing you, by choosing you, and ultimately by dying for you! The Bible says ...

**“He chose us in him before the creation  
of the world to be holy  
and blameless in his sight.”  
(Ephesians 1:4)**

- ▶ **Worth** signifies the value, merit, or significance of a person or thing.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ **Self-worth** is the belief that your life has value and significance.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ **“Worth”** is a translation of the Greek word *axios*, which means “of weight and worth.”<sup>5</sup> In biblical times, gold and other precious metals were placed on a balancing scale where their worth was determined by their weight, leading to the expression, “*worth their weight in gold*” (Lamentations 4:2).

**QUESTION: “How can someone’s worth be determined?”**

**ANSWER:** At an auction, the worth of an item is determined clearly and simply by one thing: the highest price paid. Each item goes to the highest bidder. You were bought from the auction block of sin over 2,000 years ago when the heavenly Father paid the highest price possible—the life of His Son, Jesus Christ. By that one act, your worth was forever established by God.

Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price for you—willingly dying on the cross—paying the penalty for your sins. He loves you that much! Your true worth is not based on anything *you* have done or will do, but on what *Jesus* has *already done*. Without a doubt, He established your worth. You were worth His life. You were worth dying for.

**“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.**

**This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”**

**(1 John 4:9–10)**

## WHAT IS Self-Esteem?

In Dorie's younger years, not one person valued her; no one found pleasure in her, and she found favor with no one. Since no one esteemed her, she had no sense of self-esteem. She could easily see which of the other children were treated with value and, as a result, felt valuable. Her sister was one of these highly favored ones.<sup>6</sup>

What makes you feel good about yourself? Do you consider your opinions worthy of consideration? Do you expect others to respect your boundaries, or do you hold yourself in such low esteem that you do not establish and maintain healthy boundaries—boundaries that line up with God's purpose for your life? The Bible says ...

**“Above all else, guard your heart,  
for it is the wellspring of life.”  
(Proverbs 4:23)**

- ▶ **To esteem** means “to set a high value on.”<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ **“To esteem”** is a translation of the Hebrew *hasab*, which means “to consider, plan, reckon, or think over.”<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ **To have self-esteem** is to respect or have high regard for yourself.<sup>9</sup>

**“He [Messiah] was despised,  
and we esteemed him not.”  
(Isaiah 53:3)**

**QUESTION:** “Why do some people prefer not to focus on self-esteem—but only on self-worth?”

**ANSWER:** The word *self-esteem* actually has two different meanings that are opposite to each other.

- The first is an ***objective regard of your value*** which the Bible refers to as *humility*. This self-worth is rooted in the recognition of your sins and your need for the Savior, recognition of your need to live dependently on Him, and of the fact that Christ established your worth by dying for you.

*“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”*  
(Isaiah 66:2)

- The second kind of self-esteem is an ***exaggerated regard of your value*** which the Bible refers to as *pride*. This self-esteem is rooted in the idea that you are “good enough” within yourself to meet your own needs and therefore you do not need to live dependently on the Savior. Your worth is established by your “inherent goodness” and “personal accomplishments.” But the Bible says, “*Do not be arrogant... Do not be proud... Do not be conceited.*” (Romans 11:20; 12:16)

In the Bible, God presents these two types of “self-esteem” in sharp contrast to one another.

**“God opposes the proud  
but gives grace to the humble.”  
(1 Peter 5:5)**