**MINISTERIAL SPOUSES’ CURRICULUM GUIDE: LECTURES**

Gloria Lindsey Trotman, PhD

**Lesson 17**

**Women and Self-Esteem**

*Note: The following material addresses the specific challenges of pastoral wives. If you happen to be the husband of a female pastor, feel free to look this section over and glean any wisdom that applies to your situation.*

There has been much talk about self-esteem. Some say self-esteem has no place in the life of a Christian. Others think it is a danger to our spirituality. This is not true. A correct view of self- esteem is necessary. Let us get the definition of some terms to help us.

1. Definitions/ Terms **Slides 2 & 3**

* **Self-esteem:** regard for yourself
* **Self- image:** what you think or believe of yourself
* **Self-concept:** the mental picture you have of you
* **Self-worth**: how valuable you think you are
* **Self-respect:** the respect or honor you have for yourself

1. **Low Self-esteem —The #1 Problem of Women Slide 4**
2. Feelings of inadequacy – not good enough. We are not satisfied with whom we are. We sell ourselves short.
3. Feeling like a failure. This fills us with feelings of inferiority.
4. Dissatisfaction with our bodies. We think we can never be as beautiful as the other person.
5. Preferring to be someone else. Convince yourself that you are God’s unique creation. Be thankful to be you.

*These behaviors cause a woman to behave in a way that reinforces her low self-esteem.*

1. **Factors that Affect Self-esteem Slide 5**
2. Appearance, looks. “I am not beautiful enough.”
3. Performance, ability. “I cannot do anything well.”
4. Status, level of importance. “I am only a…”
5. Belonging, acceptance. “I wish I could fit in.”
6. Competence, confidence. “I am not as good as I should be.”
7. Worthiness, value. “I do not deserve to be . . .”
8. Love. “I do not like myself. Nobody loves me.”
9. **What Low Self-esteem Does to a Woman Slide 6**
10. Very shy. Tends to withdraw and be unusually reserved.
11. Difficult to please. Nothing can be done right for her.
12. Suspicious. Thinks people always have ulterior motives.
13. Critical. Does not like to pay compliments.
14. Negative. This puts a cloud on relationships.
15. Inferior. Does not think she could ever be good enough.
16. Feels Unloved. This also makes her reluctant to treat herself well.
17. **Low Self-esteem in the Bible Slide 7**

Numbers 13: 32 – 33

32”And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

33And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

2 Cor. 10:12

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”

1. **How Do We Show Low Self-esteem? Slides 8 & 9**

Low self-esteem manifests itself in the following ways:

1. Negative body image (comparing, criticizing). “I am glad I do not have your weight problem.”
2. Inferiority complex. “I do not seem to be able to do anything right.”
3. Blowing up criticism out of proportion. “You do not seem to be able to do anything right. Remember when . . .”
4. Inability to accept compliments. “Oh, this is an old dress that I got from . . .”
5. Replaying critical tapes. “I cannot forget how she said that I . . .”
6. Depreciating others. “Well that was not a bad song she sang, but if only she did not go off key a few times . . .”
7. Expecting perfection. “Well, Honey, thanks for doing the dishes; but you should have…”
8. **How to Build Your Own Self-esteem Slides 10 -13**

Here are some helpful tips:

1. Recognize the value God placed on you. 1 Peter 1:18, 19
2. Love yourself. Lev. 19:18; Matt. 19: 19
3. Don’t compare yourself with anyone else. 2 Cor. 10:12
4. Change whatever negative features you have that can be changed.
5. Accept features that cannot be changed.
6. Realize how fortunate you are and be thankful.
7. Develop a self-improvement program.
8. Take care of your grooming.
9. Do not allow others to make you feel inferior.
10. Value yourself as God values you.
11. Watch your negative self-talk.
12. Erase the past negative tapes.
13. Learn to accept God’s love and forgiveness and forgive yourself too.
14. Have realistic expectations of yourself.
15. Remember God is disappointed when you place a low estimate upon yourself.

**Learn this quote Slide 14**

“The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves, according to the price He has placed upon them. God wants them else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them.”

*-The Desire of Ages,* p. 668.