

Chapter 12

The Good Part Of You

You Are Not All Bad

In the deep recesses of your being, how do you feel about yourself? I am not talking about your accomplishments or the image you present to the world, but how you feel deep down inside about yourself. For instance,

- Do you tend to see others as better and more capable than you?
- Do you always feel “less than” others?
- Do others seem to you to be more worthy of happiness and prosperity?
- Do you have a "poverty mentality?" (A poverty mentality is the expectation that you will never have more than the minimum necessary to live on, and that you are not worthy of more).
- Are you too easily embarrassed?
- Are you petrified to speak in front of a group?
- Do you live in fear of being rejected?
- Do you often feel like a worm?

It may surprise you to know that most of us would answer "yes" to many of these questions! Most assuredly, I was one of them.

Why would you feel this way? Is there nothing good that dwells in you? Do you therefore need to "die to self?" After all, if you are "bad," this would explain why you feel like a worm.

Who Does God Say We Are?

God doesn't agree with this view we may have of ourselves. He is very clear about this. We are made in His image.¹ You are. I am. It is not just God in us that is good (though there are also places like that). There are places in each of us that are purely "us," that are a part of who we are, that are good.² It is not just the Holy Spirit in us that is good. When God said, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness"* (Genesis 1:26),³ He did not say, "Let Us make man to be Us." We are separate creatures from Him. We are unique, but made in His image. He is the pattern, but we are not Him, and He is not us.⁴ This reality may be difficult for many to grasp, since there has been so much teaching and preaching about how awful we are.

You are not a worm. You are made in the image of God, and that Good Part of you still exists inside you.

His Image Did Not Leave Us When Adam And Eve Sinned

We are made in His image,⁵ and His image still dwells in us.⁶ Theologians do not disagree regarding the fact that the image of God dwells in us now. Where there is dispute is in regard to exactly what constitutes the Good Part and what makes up the Bad Part. This dispute is not likely to be resolved until Jesus comes again, because the Scripture is not specific enough to tell us. Fortunately, we don't need to know in detail, because Jesus knows. The key point for us to realize is that there

¹ See **Endnote #12-1** on God's image in us.

² See **Endnote #12-2** on uncovering the buried treasure inside you.

³ When speaking of "Us" in this passage, God is referring to the Holy Trinity.

⁴ Some say that our spirit is the "good part," but that view does not match Scripture. See **Endnote #9-1** for more information on this issue. Also See **Endnote #12-3** on your own individuality.

⁵ Genesis 1:26-27 says the following: *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea" . . . So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

⁶ One might be tempted to say here that the image of God was in man before the fall, but after the fall, we were totally corrupted. However, Genesis 9:6, speaking after the fall, says: *Who ever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.* So it is evident that the image of God still resided in man after the fall.

James 3:9 says the following, referring to the tongue: *With it we bless our God and father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the image of God.* So, the image of God still resided in people in the time of James.

is, here and now, a good part in each of us that is made in the image of God!⁷

Humility And Pride

Humility is a word that is frequently misused. Often humility is viewed as recognizing what a worm I am, and how bad I am. "I am just an old sinner." But humility really means to see myself the way God sees me. When Jesus walked the earth He was humble, and yet He did not see Himself as a worm. He did not see Himself as less than He was, nor more than He was. He saw Himself as God the Father saw Him. He was the only begotten Son and He was God, but He was not God the Father. He did the will of the Father, not His own will (Matthew 26:39), because God the Father was preeminent.

Humility is about truth. We are not to see ourselves as more than we are, nor less than we are. Certainly, to see the truth about who we are in comparison with who God is eliminates the possibility of prideful boasting on our part. And yet, we are valuable because we are valuable to God.⁸ At the same time, it is important that we find out who the unique person is that God made us to be. To recognize our strengths that He gave us as a gift is not prideful or wrong. Pride says that we did something to earn it. Gifts by their very nature are not earned. They are freely bestowed on us and are dependent on the giver, not the receiver. So our strengths are free gifts bestowed on us, not things we manufactured or earned by our own effort.⁹ Pride is to see myself as

⁷ This "good part" is what I am calling the Treasure Inside, and it is the core of our being. It is a gift from God, and it can't be changed. Everybody who has children knows that each child was born with certain gifts and propensities. Children are not simply raw material to be shaped into any form we choose. If they sense that they are unacceptable to us, they will try to change in order to please us. Because their Treasure Inside can't be changed, they will fail in their attempt to become acceptable, and they will begin to see themselves as fatally flawed.

Psalm 139:13-14: *For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.* This is hardly the description of a creature that is "all bad."

⁸ **Romans 5:8:** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* See also Ephesians 2:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 1 John 4:10.

⁹ "Today I understand vocation" (what I do) "quite differently - not as a goal to be achieved but as a gift to be received. Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God" (Palmer, p.10).

more than I am. See Chapter 13, "The Bad Part Of You," for more on pride.

Why Do We See Ourselves As Worms?

Let me try to explain why so many of us feel badly about ourselves. For some of us, we got constant messages from our parents that we weren't worth much. Most importantly, our parents did not give us messages that confirm the truth about our worth and our Treasure Inside - we were victims of Type A Trauma (the "absence of the good," Chapter 10). You may remember that destroying our sense of being loveable and worthwhile is exactly what Type A Trauma does. Type A Trauma is epidemic, and to some degree it is probably universal.

Other Voices

Our siblings likely also gave us these same messages that did not confirm our worth. Since they were raised in the same home, they also suffered from Type A Trauma. In such a home there is competition for the few crumbs of The Blessing which are available in the family. Each child is trying to raise himself above the others, because if he can feel superior to another child, he won't feel so badly about himself at that moment.

The voices that wounded us are:

- 1. Parents**
- 2. Siblings**
- 3. Our culture**
- 4. The church**

I have an older sister who was also very wounded by Type A Trauma. She was three years older than I, was a brilliant student, and was much larger than I was. When I was growing up she would set traps for me and play tricks on me to prove how much better she was, and she used to beat me up and take my stuff. She used to make fun of me, and called me "Shrimpo," because for much of our time growing up I only came up to her shoulder. She did all of these things to make herself feel a little better about herself, and what she said and did tore me down even further. Her message just added to my already fragile self-image.

Our culture also tells us how unworthy we are. The other children are doing the same thing as our siblings – competing for the crumbs of blessing that are available. Our culture is obsessed with being Number One, and competing to be Number One is seen as a wonderful thing! Since by definition there can only be one Number One, that makes the

rest of us “losers.” And those who are Number One in football are probably not Number One in math, or art, or perhaps anything except athletics. Thus they too are “losers.” Therefore we are all losers, and most of us feel that way about ourselves. It is a cultural sickness, and is beautifully described as such by Alfie Kohn in his book, No Contest.¹⁰

Interestingly, when we compare ourselves with others, the areas where we aren’t as good as the others are what impact us. Ironically, when we become Number One at something, it seems hollow. The good feeling of having achieved this victory is fleeting, and we still feel badly about ourselves, because we focus on those areas where we fall short. God is clear about this: *But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise* (2 Corinthians 10:12, KJV).

The Church has also tended to focus on the bad, giving us the impression that there is nothing good that dwells in us.

One scripture presented in support of this is Romans 7:18: *For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) nothing good dwells.* It is in my flesh only that nothing good dwells, and these teachers assume this refers to all of my natural being. But flesh (Greek *sarx*) is another fuzzy Greek word. A detailed study reveals that my flesh, as referred to in this scripture, is only a part of me, not all of my being. Read Chapter 13, “The Bad Part Of You” for more on this. Jeremiah Chapter 17 is often raised as proof that nothing good dwells in me. Again, we are faced with a fuzzy word, the Hebrew word *leb*. There is significant doubt that Jeremiah is referring to our entire inner man.¹¹

¹⁰ Kohn, Alfie, in bibliography.

¹¹ **Jeremiah, Chapter 17** says in part, *The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?* As I have said earlier, we really can't specify that it's my heart where the wickedness lies. I cannot say with biblical authority exactly what part of me is deceitful and desperately wicked, because the Hebrew word here translated into English as "heart" is translated as many inner parts of me in other parts of the Old Testament. It is the translators' choice to use "heart," but there are several other options. Therefore the best I can really say in translating this verse in Jeremiah is something more like, "Somewhere deep inside of man there is a place that is deceitful above things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Going beyond this is speculative.

See Endnote #12-5 for more details on Jeremiah 17.

Likewise, I can also only say that somewhere deep inside me there is a part of me that is made in the image of God. When faced with such doubt about the exact meaning of a word, we need to rely on other areas of the Word of God to clarify the meaning, if that is indeed possible. Some issues mentioned in the Bible will always remain fuzzy.

Further evidence that Jeremiah 17 is not referring to my Treasure Inside is the destruction that occurs in my life when I see myself as all bad. Admittedly this is only indirect scriptural evidence, but it is very powerful evidence; because it is true that whenever I align myself with God's truth, blessings flow. When I align myself with a lie, curses occur. This is simply the way God's laws work.

Further evidence we see of our own awfulness is that we are not living up to the standards laid out for us by the church.¹² Deep inside we know we are falling short, and we feel that others are more successful as Christians. I then think, "I am surely bad."

So we believed all these voices that surrounded our formative years. Certainly, we think, they can't all be wrong. From all of this we receive our identity. We see ourselves as bad.¹³

But these voices are all wrong. God sees us differently, and He is always right.

How Can We See Ourselves As God Sees Us?

Many other teachers and authors have made lists of scriptures that tell us how much God loves us, how valuable we are in His sight, how we are His children, etc. They encourage us to meditate on this list, with the implication that this exercise will convince us of who we really are. While it is very important to know how God feels about us, meditating on such a list (with our head) will not change how we feel about ourselves. Those of you that have tried this know how ineffective, frustrating, and discouraging this is. In our head we know how God see us, but the messages fail to make the journey to our heart. Our feelings don't change.

Then how can you change how you feel about yourself? That is what this book is intended to show you. If you read the book and walk it out, you will begin to see yourself as God sees you, because the living God will show you. As you begin to feel His love, the lies about how bad you are will be washed away. Remember that judging yourself causes the wound which triggers the Big Hurt, and this happens because this bitter root is so contrary to how God intended for you to see yourself.

¹² In many Christian circles, and indeed in our culture itself, there is a subtle but profound distrust of everything that comes up from inside us. Therefore, we attempt to consciously monitor and control our behavior with our intellect and willpower. Whenever we do this we are falling into the trap of striving, and are doomed to fail. Instead, we need to recognize there is a good part inside us that is our friend, learn to discern his or her voice, and follow that leading. Indeed, there is also a "bad part" inside us (read Chapter 13), but that voice is very different than the voice of our Treasure Inside.

¹³ See Endnote #12-4 regarding the misperception that you are all "bad."

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to help you recognize some misconceptions about how bad you are.

There is a part of you that was corrupted by The Fall, but this corrupted part is not all of who you are. There is a part of you that is made in the image of God. It is "you," it is good, and it still exists in you. God says so in His Word. This is true whether you believe it or not.

For you to be sanctified, all that is "you" does not have to die. You are not rotten to the core.

A key part of your sanctification process (Inner Healing) is a complete change of attitude towards who you are. There is buried treasure inside you. You need to come to know that this is true before you can possibly be reconciled with yourself and have harmony inside. After all, who would want to love and be best friends with something evil?

For you to be sanctified (changed into the image of Jesus), all that is "you" does not have to die. You are not rotten to the core. God does not intend to annihilate you and replace you with Jesus. The real "you," your "Treasure Inside," is already made in God's image - and thus does not need to be sanctified further.

However, your "Honeycomb" does contain areas that are not holy, and which need to be transformed. And there is a part of you that is your fallen nature, your "God-wannabe." The next chapter will address this "Bad Part," the concept of "dying to self;" and this awareness will help you sort out the "Good Part" from the "Bad Part."