

## Transformed

### *Thinking of Yourself*

Today in my Bible Study Fellowship, our group leader asked why it's so hard to take a lowly position. I responded dryly, "I don't mind taking a lowly position as long as someone notices." And everyone laughed way too hard. Was I even joking? I hope so, but that was definitely a joke that had some underlying truth to it.

In our verse today, we'll see that Paul reminds us that everything we could possibly pride ourselves on has been given to us by God. He even starts by saying the grace (or in some versions "authority") to write this letter to the church in Rome, was from God.

*"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you." – Romans 12:3*

In what ways do you think of yourself more highly than you ought? What tempts you to be prideful? You worked super hard to get where you are now. Into vet school, through vet school, into practice, owning that practice. It probably took grit and determination, IQ and EQ to do what you've done. And if you're using it for God's glory, even better. Are you using veterinary medicine as a bridge to share Christ's love on campus, in your clinic, in your community, and around the world? If so, I'm sure God is grateful. Wait...maybe that's upside down...

Let's read it in the Message translation:

*"I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him."*

-Romans 12:3 (MSG)

I don't know about you, but I might need to read that again, because that is not how the world assigns value. That paradigm shift can sure be humbling. But isn't it also freeing? Even our faith comes from God. It's not up to us, it's not about us. So, maybe we should stop thinking about ourselves so much.

One sign that helps me recognize that I might be thinking too highly of myself is getting offended. A truly humble person is not easily offended.

My pastor said recently that people, or the church, sometimes try to categorize sin. We put ourselves in this circle over here with these struggles, but there are other people in that struggle circle over there and they are much worse. But Jesus doesn't look at us that way. To Jesus the most reprehensible sin was probably self-righteousness. We see over and over again that the only people He seemed to get frustrated with were the ones that thought too highly of

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themselves, the Pharisees. What an oxymoron. Just by thinking we're better than others, we become worse than them.

It is a delicate balance I have not mastered to want to be the best vet, mom, wife, friend, manager, neighbor, and servant of Christ that I can be, while living fully in the freedom that it is by grace alone. We have nothing to boast in. Our IQ, our EQ, our grit, our diplomas, our families, our practices, our awards, our skills, our accomplishments, even our faith are all gifts from God.

I love this passage about Moses and the veils:

*"But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being **transformed** into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"*

– 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

The freedom and the transformation come from the Lord. Rest in that.

- 1) **How are you tempted to think of yourself more highly than you ought?**
- 2) **Have you been in a situation where you thought a role was beneath you?**
- 3) **Does thinking of yourself lead you to unhealthy comparisons with others?**
- 4) **How can you take your focus off yourself?**
- 5) **How can we participate in the transformation into His glory that the Lord is doing in us?**



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