

Abundant Life: The Love Cycle, Righteous Self-Love

Loving yourself requires laying down your life for the one who loved
you first!

Prayer

Ephesians 3:14-21 New Living Translation

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Growth

14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,[a] 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.[b] 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. 20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

A Warning

1 John 2:15-17 New King James Version

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- The only way not to have a love for this world is to have a heart that's not of this world.

The Foundation of Self-Love

Ephesians 2:1-10 New Living Translation

2 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.[a] He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else. 4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) 6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. 7 So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. 8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10 For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

A Self-Love Story

Luke 15:11-32 New Living Translation

Parable of the Lost Son

11 To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: “A man had two sons. 12 The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. 13 “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.

- “The corruption that was in us from birth was expressed through the deeds and desires of our self-life. We lived by whatever natural cravings and thoughts our minds dictated, living as rebellious children subject to God’s wrath like everyone else. But God still loved us with such great love. He is so rich in compassion and mercy. Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, he united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by his wonderful grace!”

Ephesians 2:3-5 The Passion Translation

14 About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. 16 The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

- Selfishness brings you to the end of yourself.
- It's where you should discover I don't like this version of me.

17 "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!

- When you wake up, you'll have conversations with yourself, drawing you back into love.
- You'll see your conditions and realize that they don't match your value. Your value is the measure by which you are loved by God, this is the basis of our self-love.
- When righteous self-love awakens, you take ownership of your conditions, and your heart turns back towards the Father's love.

18 I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."

- Our worth is determined by the love of the Father, not by what we think we deserve.
- Selfishness caused him to ask for his inheritance, and he spent it foolishly, because he was a fool.
- Once he recognized his foolishness instinctively, he devalued himself to the place of a servant.

20 “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

- Don’t ever forget this! Your value is not based on your performance but the Father’s passion for you.

21 His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.[a]’ 22 “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

- Since you don’t get to determine your value, let the voice of the Father quiet the lies!
- Let Him cover your shame with the finest robe, replace the self-dignity you sold with a ring, and new shoes for your new walk.

25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, 26 and he asked one of the servants what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’ 28 “The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, 29 but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. 30 Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’ 31 “His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. 32 We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’”

Righeous Self-Love

John 15:13

New Living Translation

13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

- As we see with the prodigal's son, godly self-love is not picking up your life for your own use, but laying it down.
- Jesus did it for us, so we follow suit, we join him in obedience, which is the way God instructs us to love Him.

Galatians 2:20 New King James Version

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- So we join Christ in death because we understand that there is no good thing in our sinful nature, and by obeying it, we become slaves to it. Paul asked who would save Him from his body of death, and He said the answer was Jesus.

Romans 12:1-2 New Living Translation

12 And so, dear brothers and sisters,[a] I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.[b]
2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

- In righteous self-love, you love God first by presenting yourself as a living sacrifice. Loving God first saves your life by giving it to Him. Loving you first (as in the sinful nature) leads to destruction.
- In true self-love, we don't love ourselves more than we love God.
- Righteous self-love is when we love ourselves like God loves us.
- RSL is full of sacrifices, telling ourselves no to tell God yes.
- To be led by the Spirit, our faith must be in Christ, so our lives also may be.
- So that you can have a spiritual mind that dwells on spiritual things
- Without me, you can do nothing

God is Love

1 John 4:7-8 New Living Translation

7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- You can't truly love yourself if love (God) doesn't live in you.
- Did Jesus love himself? Yes! Because He obeyed God and was led by the Holy Spirit.
- Those who truly love God and themselves follow the Holy Spirit, revealing themselves as the children of God.
- How do we love ourselves? Because love lives in us, we choose holiness and righteousness, and to obey the Father.
- Your self-love is determined by who you're being led by. If you're being led by the sinful nature, you've got a sinful self-love. If you're being led by the Spirit, you have a righteous self-love.
- Being led by the spirit means fulfilling the things the spirit requires in the word.
- Being led by the flesh means doing the things it requires in the world.
- When the prodigal's son put himself first, everything fell apart. When he came to himself, he remembered his father's love, repented, and was restored.
- You know you're truly loving yourself when you're continually drawing nearer to God.
- Walk by the spirit of love, drawing us back to God.
- True love is Jesus saying, "Come back to God!" True self-love is responding, "Lord, here I come!"
- Anyone walking towards God truly loves themselves because God is love. Anyone who truly loves themselves walks out of the darkness and into His light.
- The more you love yourself, the more interested you become in the things that last forever, because so will you.
- You may say I don't know how to love me, but God says "I do"!
- To love yourself is to have an absolute passion to want to be like Jesus. To share life with Him, to be close to Him.