

Confidence

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Alright, our second lesson, to be a successful preacher, a successful Christian, we must live a life of confidence. Positive Christian living requires a life of confidence. But confident living does not come easy. It's not something that one is born with. It has to be developed. Some may have a harder time developing this in their lives than others. Their parents may have been perfectionists or overbearing. The parents may not have shown their love and appreciation sufficiently. They may have had good intentions but wrong methods. However, we can all live confidently in Christ, if we set our minds to the task.

Let me give you some indications of a lack of confidence. Personal frustration and unhappiness. Shyness that causes me to stay in the background. Fearfulness and insecurity, self consciousness and being ill at ease, uncertainty of self, failure or discouragement, feelings of unworthiness, questioning and doubting God's love and care for me, and a bad outlook about myself.

So how can I develop this life of confidence? Well, first, I must have a healthy view of myself. Now, if I overrate myself, I'll become proud, arrogant, haughty, conceited, and this is condemned severely in the Word of God. We read in James chapter 4, verse 6, "God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble." We also read in Romans chapter 12, verse 3, "A man is not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. Rather, he is to think soberly." We must be careful that we do not be filled with pride.

In the book of Esther, there was a man who was very puffed up about himself. Does anybody remember this man's name? Haman. Haman was very proud of himself. He thought everybody should bow to him. What was the name of the man who refused to bow? Yes. Mordecai would not bow. It enraged Harmon. So he went home and he gathered up his friends and family and told them about all of his riches and how the king had made very special places for him. But he said, "All that means nothing to me as long as this Mordecai will not bow down to me." So his friend said, "Well build a gallows, and we'll hang Mordecai on it." But who got hanged on the gallows? Yes. His pride was his downfall. Because Queen Esther revealed to the king what kind of man he was. We must not be proud and arrogant, like Harman.

But on the other hand, we must not underrate ourselves. When I become irresponsible and cowardly, shy and fearful, insecure — that's because we're underrating ourselves. My inferiority complex and self doubt will cut deep scars into my personality. I'll have feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness and failure. I'll have feelings of dislike about myself and everything around me. I'll have feelings of self pity, and even taking my life, because of the depression that comes.

Let's read 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 7. "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind." A sound mind is a healthy mind. We also read in Revelation chapter 21, verse 8. Right here with all of these bad sins that are committed, is fearfulness. Fearfulness, which keeps us

from being what we ought to be, having a lack of trust in God, feelings of self-worthlessness. God expects us to be confident people in Him. God wants us to have a good, healthy, vital image and outlook about ourselves.

God's whole approach to man shows how he views us. He created us in His image. We read in Genesis 1, verse 26, and in verse 31. God created us in His own image, and he called us "very good." He gave us preeminence over everything on the earth. Verse 28. Even after man rebelled against God, He loves us. We read in John 3:16. And the Bible says, "God so loved the world," he's not talking about the earth, the physical creation. He's talking about the cosmos, unregenerate, mankind. The sending of His Son to die for us proves our worth in his eyes. He tells us even the very hairs of our head are numbered. Matthew chapter 10. So God knows the very, most intimate details about each one of us. He loves us and we are special to him.

And then special privileges are given to those who become his children. And he places us in His church or his kingdom. We read in Colossians chapter 1, verses 13 and 14. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Only those who come in obedience to Christ are given this privilege.

Another privilege we have is, his Holy Spirit dwells within us. We read in 1 Corinthians chapter six, verse 19. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, whom you have of God. You're not your own." And so we're to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's.

He's also made an inheritance for us that's unmeasurable. 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 3 and 4. He's made an inheritance for us that is incorruptible, undefiled. And, where is this inheritance?

He's also promised provisions for our earthly life. Matthew chapter 6, verse 33. How do we seek first the kingdom of God? To be baptized and obey the gospel, and then live a faithful Christian life. Jesus, in the passage, had been talking about food and clothing, and he said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you."

He's also promised provisions for our eternal life. He said in Matthew 25, verse 46. Those on the left hand will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous on the right will go into eternal life. And so God wants us to have a proper outlook about ourselves. That means that we must develop our skills, greater knowledge, experience, greater competence will help develop Christian living. When we develop our skills, we become more confident.

During the First World War, the machine guns would often jam on the airplanes. One pilot learned how to spend the evening before loading his own gun. And this gave him greater confidence the next day in the battle.

There was a young woman who wanted to learn how to teach others about Christ, but she lacked confidence. Then she happened to see an advertisement about a Bible course, that she could study by correspondence. So she took that course, and another course, and still another. And all the time, she was increasing her knowledge of the Bible. And her confidence in teaching others grew greatly.

So knowledge, experience and competency increasing brings great confidence in what we can do. And it brings greater usefulness and greater happiness.

We read in 2 Peter, chapter 3, verse 18. He tells us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” Why should we grow in this way? The apostle Paul was able to live confidently what he said in Philippians, chapter 4, verse 13. Now when did he say this? At what point in his life did he say this? Was it at the beginning of his Christian life? So when was it? Where was he when he wrote this letter to the Philippians? He was in prison. He said, “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. I know how to be full and I know how to be hungry.” He said, “I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content.” And so it was then that he said, “I can do all these things through Christ who strengthens me.” His knowledge, experience and faith had strengthen him. Then he could say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 6 through 8. And when did he say this? At the end of his life. At the end of a long life of service to God. His confidence was unshakable. You see that confidence can be developed. Even the Apostle Paul was not always confident in his life.

He said in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 3, “I was with you in weakness and much fear, in much trembling.” So his confidence would go up and down. But, through the all these experiences his confidence grew greatly. And so we can expect to be confident in our lives, if we develop our knowledge, develop our competency, and profit by our experiences.