



I Want Happiness Now!

By Dr. Henry Brandt with Phil Landrum

CONCLUSION

If your goal is to maintain good physical health, you pay attention to some important details:

1. Diet
2. Sleep
3. Exercise

You need knowledge about these areas so you provide time and expend energy to inform yourself of what is involved. Your interest is to act according to your knowledge.

There may be days when you are tempted to, or even choose to consciously behave in ways contrary to your knowledge. Then you renew your commitment to your goal and start over again.

If, on a daily basis, you do what is necessary, you are on your way to good physical health. No one else can do these things for you.

Likewise, if your goal is to build self-respect or self-love you also pay attention to some important details.

You need knowledge, so you provide the time and energy to inform yourself of what is involved. Your intent is to act according to your knowledge. No one else can do this for you. Either you do this for yourself or it won't be done.

There may be days when you are tempted, or even choose to consciously behave in ways contrary to your knowledge. Then you renew your commitment to your goal and start over again.

If, on a daily basis, you act according to your knowledge, you will build a healthy self-respect and will be in shape to love your neighbor.

If you neglect these areas you will sooner or later sense a dislike of yourself and your neighbor.

The Bible gives some broad, basic instructions for wholesome living. Jesus said:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment (Matthew 22:37-38).

How can you know if you love God that much? Jesus answers that question as He taught His disciples:

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15).

That we can understand. If you seek physical health, you learn the fundamentals, get into shape, and strive constantly to stay in shape. The effort and the result is one of the delights of life.

If you seek self-respect—or self-love—you learn the fundamentals, get into shape, and strive constantly to stay in shape. The effort and the result is one of the delights of your life.

Jesus said there is a second commandment like the great and foremost one—and on these two commandments depend the "whole Law and the Prophets":

You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39).

I have spent a lifetime listening to the stories of people who don't like themselves. As a result, they have problems loving other people.

In short, if you don't love yourself, you are out of shape and unable to love your neighbor as Jesus commanded.

The details of why my clients don't love themselves vary, but gradually I've become aware of recurring themes in these stories as people tell me how they have chipped away at their own self-respect, which leads to personal anxiety and misery as well as trouble with other people. I repeat these once more:

1. Behavior
2. Speech
3. Reactions
4. Thoughts
5. Goals

To locate yourself—that is, to determine if your performance in each of these areas builds up or chips away at your self-respect—you need a standard to go by, a mirror. This book has used the Bible as the standard.

Hopefully, each chapter has whetted your appetite to know more, and you will search your Bible to enlarge your knowledge. I encourage you to review the chapters in this book again and again.

In recent years, I have observed rapid deterioration in marriages and families. It is for this reason that some brief comments and recommendations for further reading are included.

As your behavior, speech, reactions, thoughts, and goals come closer to matching God's commandments, you will have a growing sense of self-respect and a growing love for your neighbor—you are on the road to becoming indestructible.

Review Questions

1. There may be days when you are tempted, or even choose to consciously behave in ways contrary to your knowledge. What should you do then?
2. What Bible verse does the author cite as some broad, basic instructions for wholesome living? Commit this verse to memory.
3. How can you know if you love God that much?
4. What is the second commandment like the one above? Commit this also to memory.
5. Why is it important for us to love ourselves?
6. What is the standard we need to use as a guide for how we act, so that our resulting behavior will help to build our own self-respect and our love for God and for others?

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