

What We Think Of Ourselves Is Very Important

The human being who is **seriously** convinced that they deserve to end up in hell, is **not** likely to go there.

The human being who believes they are worthy of a place in the kingdom of heaven will certainly **never** enter that blessed future.

I used the word “seriously” to distinguish a true conviction from a mere nominal belief.

It is possible to go through life with certain beliefs but having no real conviction.

We can inherit or pick up from our religious social circle a conventional creed.

If this creed requires that we admit our own depravity we do so and feel proud of our fidelity to the Christian faith, but do **not** consider ourselves worthy of damnation.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“The wages of sin is death ...”*

Eternal death.

Isaiah 6:5 [NIV] *“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”*

When we see the purity, holiness and majesty of our Creator God, like Isaiah, we begin to see our total unworthiness to ever be in His presence.

We only then begin to see ourselves as a *“child of hell”*, only fit for eternal death.

This is an experience more profound than theology, more painfully intimate than any creed.

While bitter and very harsh it is true of a human’s Holy Spirit illuminated view of themselves.

Within every human being is a powerful unwillingness to admit the depths of our inner depravity.

We do **not** like to believe God’s actual judgement of us except as we hold it as a superficial creed.

When God’s revealed Word puts the pressure on us we back away.

“A child of sin, maybe, but never a child of hell.”

Luke 18:9-14 [NIV] *“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

We manage to live with this story in some degree of comfort by keeping it at full arm’s length and never permitting it to catch hold of our conscience.

We tell ourselves *“these two men are long ago dead and their story has become a religious classic, we are different, how can it apply to us today?”*

The problem is that this did not happen a long time ago, but the last time we knelt to pray.

These two men are **not** dead, but alive and found in our local church fellowship.

The profound conviction that we are totally unworthy of any future life in God’s presence, that we are indeed by nature only fitted for destruction, is the only way we will come to true repentance.

Proverbs 9:10 [NIV] *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*

True wisdom begins with a fear of God and His judgement.

Hebrews 10:26-27 [NIV] *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”*

Sin is not to be taken lightly.

Hebrews 10:30-31 [NIV] *“For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

We need to dread taking lightly God’s Word and the fact we are to give account for all we have done with the life that God has given us.

To spend eternity in the presence of a holy loving God is a gift beyond price, worth any sacrifice on our part.

Luke 14:25-27 [NIV] *“Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”*

The word translated *“hate”* means love less by comparison.

To carry our cross is to be willing to die as far as our own wishes are concerned, only seeking to fulfil God’s desires for the life He has given us.

If we are **not** willing to sacrifice all that this Satan-driven society offers, we are **not** worthy to receive this gift from our Creator.

Revelation 21:7-8 [NIV] *“He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

A list of all who will experience the *“second death”* from which there is **no** resurrection.

The emphasis is that nothing evil and no unrepentant sinner will be in God’s Holy presence, to corrupt or harm any of His faithful servants.

The fear of God is the beginning of true wisdom.

If we lack the beginning we will never experience a wise ending to our life.